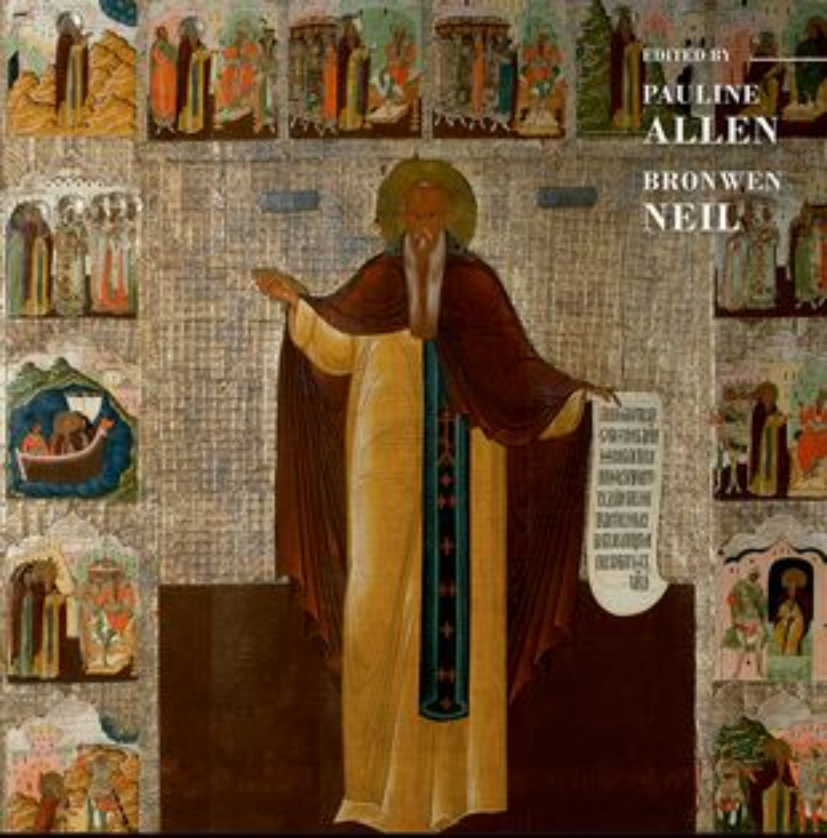

EDITED BY
PAULINE ALLEN
BRONWEN NEIL

The Oxford Handbook *of* MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

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Life and Times of Maximus the Confessor

Pauline Allen

The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor
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Abstract and Keywords

Allen presents a summary of Maximus' life, from his birth *c.* 579–580 to his death on 13 August 662, giving an account of his extensive travels, and of the contacts he made along the way. Also included are details about his trials and exiles and how these were represented in the various accounts of his life—three recensions in Greek, one *vita* in Syriac, and several epitomes. A discussion is dedicated to the vexed question of the interrelationship between the three Greek recensions, and the trustworthiness of both Greek and Syriac traditions. The part played by lesser-known participants in the monothelite controversy, notably Maximus' disciples Anastasius the monk and Anastasius the Apocrisiarius, Theodore Spudaeus, Theodosius of Gangra, and the brothers Theodore and Euprepius, is outlined. A tentative timeline marking the main events of Maximus' life is offered.

Keywords: Anastasius the monk, Anastasius the Apocrisiarius, Life of Maximus, Theodore Spudaeus, Theodosius of Gangra, monothelite controversy

IN this chapter I shall briefly outline the historical background to Maximus' life and works and discuss some of the significant others in his life. After a brief account of the Confessor's works, I deal with the main sources for his life, discussing their reliability, before attempting a chronological reconstruction and a timeline.

Background

In his lifetime, which spanned the period *c.*580–662, Maximus was the subject of no fewer than five Byzantine emperors: Tiberius (578–82), Maurice (582–602), Phocas (602–10), Heraclius (610–41) (see Reinink and Stolte 2002), and Constans II (645–68) (Haldon 1997; Kaegi 2003). In addition, he lived through the times of many patriarchs of Constantinople and bishops of Rome. The reigns of the emperors in Constantinople during this period stood in the shadows cast by the fall-out after the Council of Chalcedon (451) and the increasing dangers posed by Avars, Slavs, Persians, and Arabs. After the death of Muhammad in 632, Damascus and Emesa fell to the Muslims in 635, Syria soon after, and Jerusalem was surrendered to the Arabs by Patriarch Sophronius in 637 or 638 (Ekonomou 2007: 60). This was followed by Muslim conquests in North Africa from 642 (Kaegi 2010: 116–44). These were turbulent times in which internal, external, and ecclesiastical politics overlapped.[1] It is significant that in this period three of the five patriarchates of the church of the East quickly passed out of the Byzantine emperor's jurisdiction, leaving only Constantinople and Rome. As a result of wars there were huge numbers of displaced people within the empire as many Greeks fled from the eastern (p. 4) provinces to the West, especially to Carthage, Sicily, southern Italy, and Rome (Sansterre 1980). Among these refugees was a large number of monks, including Maximus the Confessor, whose forced sojourns in the West were advantageous to his efforts to fight imperial heresy. As can be seen from the suggested timeline at the end of this chapter, Maximus' ties with Africa were particularly strong: he was there between 626 and 630, in 632, 633, or 644, and again, at the latest, in 641 and 645, arguing for orthodox doctrine. To the Confessor and others, Byzantine military defeats were directly

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caused by the monoenergist and monothelite policies of Emperors Heraclius and Constans II.

On the ecclesiastical front, the repeated imperial efforts to secure religious unity that had been attempted from 451 onwards continued, albeit in other guises and with different goals. Emperor Tiberius and his successors had failed in reconciling not only anti-Chalcedonians with pro-Chalcedonians but also various anti-Chalcedonian groups with each other, especially those in the patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria (Allen 2013). The tritheist dispute in particular proved a stumbling block to unity in the ranks of the opponents of Chalcedon, but may have had ramifications on the other side of the Chalcedonian fence as well. Heraclius assumed an energetic role, first of all trying to broker a deal between the patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria, a deal which the sources dismiss as 'wishy-washy' (ὑδροβάφη).[2] While this union has been traditionally dated to 616 (e.g. by Olster 1985; Allen 2009: 24–6), it is now argued that in fact it occurred in 617 (Jankowiak 2009: 18–20; cf. Booth 2013: 104–5, 237). A well-documented meeting in Mabbug in 629/30 between Heraclius and Athanasius Gammal, anti-Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch (593–631), demonstrates that by that stage the focus of internal religious conflict had shifted from tritheism to monoenergism, or the doctrine of one activity (*energeia*) in Christ,[3] also master-minded by Emperor Heraclius, who was aided by Sergius, the versatile patriarch of Constantinople (610–38) (van Dieten 1972: 1–56).

Monoenergism was intended by Heraclius and Sergius as a project with the aim of restoring ecclesiastical unity (Hovorun 2008: 55–67). Its assertion of one activity in Christ could appeal to the anti-Chalcedonians, while its retention of the two-nature doctrine would pacify the adherents of the Council of 451. However, it has been argued that the difference between the doctrines of one or two activities was more terminological than real (Price 2010: 223; Booth 2013: 218; cf. Tannous 2014). Be that as it may, in time it seemed only natural to some that the assertion of one activity in Christ necessitated also the affirmation of one will (θέλησις, θέλημα), thereby inaugurating the monothelite debate.

Various official documents played a role in the evolution of the monoenergist movement. On 3 June 633 a *Plerophoria* (announcement or pact of union) was promulgated in Alexandria by the patriarch and *augustalis* Cyrus,[4] a convert to monoenergism, with (p. 5) the intention of rallying the various parties under the banner of Cyril, Chalcedon, and the Fifth Ecumenical Council of 553. Among others, Sophronius, by this time patriarch of Jerusalem, objected to this document in a confrontation with Patriarch Cyrus later reported by Maximus in his *Opusc.*12 (PG 91. 143C–D; see Booth 2013: 209). However, the anti-Chalcedonian party in Alexandria agreed to its terms and was reconciled, to the great satisfaction of Cyrus and Sergius.

In a *Psephos* or resolution, which can be dated to August 633 (Winkelmann 2001: 73–4, nr. 36), Sergius asserted that there should be no further talk of either one or two activities in Christ, and that, subsequent to the 'union' effected in Alexandria, Cyrus should henceforth avoid mentioning one or two activities (Allen 2009: 29). Likewise Sophronius, later patriarch of Jerusalem, was to abstain from speaking of one or two activities in Christ. We may assume that these concessions were made in the face of objections which had been made by Sophronius and his follower, Maximus the Confessor, to the doctrine of monoenergism (Winkelmann 2001: 72–3, nr. 35), although in the *Synodical Letter* which Sophronius circulated to fellow bishops on his accession as patriarch in 634, he adopts a careful tone about doctrinal debates (Jankowiak 2009: 133; Allen 2009: 44–5). Curiously, the *Psephos* was approved by Maximus, although he sought clarification of certain terms contained in it.[5] These developments were reported by Sergius to Pope Honorius (625–38), who, theologically inept as he was, sent his congratulations on the theological agreement in the eastern churches. This letter, which dates to 634/5, contained what was to become the kernel of the doctrine of monothelitism, namely a confession of one will in Christ, such that Honorius was later credited with being the inventor of the heresy (Allen 2009: 33, 204–9).

The Syriac *Life* informs us that soon afterwards, probably in the first half of 636, Sophronius continued his resistance to monoenergism by writing a letter to Bishop Arcadius of Cyprus at the insistence of Maximus (Brock 1973: 315–16). This letter survives only in part (Albert–von Schönborn 1978). Present were Patriarchs Cyrus of Alexandria, Sergius of Constantinople, Sophronius himself, and representatives of the incumbents of other sees, including the author of the Syriac *Life*. Maximus purportedly did not attend, sending Anastasius the disciple in his stead. The upshot of the council was that a letter was sent to Heraclius outlining the 'doctrine of Sophronius and the rascal Maximus' (Brock 1973: 317), which prompted the emperor to publish an edict, known as the *Ekthesis* (Jankowiak 2009: 149; Booth 2013: 239–41).

The traditional date of the *Ekthesis* or statement is 638, but Jankowiak has argued convincingly that it was

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published shortly after the Council of Cyprus, thus in 636 (Jankowiak 2009: 159). In the document, which was composed by Patriarch Sergius, the debate moves from the terminology associated with the activity or activities in Christ to that of the will or wills.[6] All discussion of one or two activities is forbidden, and one (p. 6) will is confessed in Christ. The edict was accepted warmly by Sergius' successor, Pyrrhus (638–41), a Palestinian monk who was probably an adversary of Sophronius (Jankowiak 2009: 181). The *Ekthesis* signalled another failed attempt at ecclesiastical union, in that opposition to it grew, particularly in the West, where Popes Severinus (638–40), John IV (640–42), Theodore I (642–49), and Martin (649–53) refused to accept it. Only ten years afterwards, the document was rescinded by the *Typos* or regulation, an edict issued in the name of Emperor Constans II, which forbade any mention of either one or two activities or wills in Christ (Winkelmann 2001: 123 nr. 106; Hovorun 2008: 82–3). Unperturbed by the *Typos*, Maximus continued to oppose monothelitism and seems to have come out openly against it in *c.*640 (Louth 1996: 16). In the meantime Anastasius the apocrisiarius and other dyothelites in Constantinople were sent into exile, possibly because of their resistance to the document (Allen–Neil 2002: 156; Jankowiak 2009: 241; Booth 2013: 292–3).

Meanwhile, the imperial house was in disarray. In 641 Emperor Heraclius died and left the crown to Constantine III and Heraclonas, two sons by different mothers. When Constantine died shortly afterwards, Martina, the mother of Heraclonas and infamously both the wife and niece of the recently deceased emperor, seized power. However, her reign was short lived as she was deposed in November of the same year and replaced by Constans II, Heraclius' grandson. The monothelite patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, a supporter of Martina, was either deposed or resigned at the same time and retreated to Africa (van Dieten 1972: 57–75; Booth 2013: 252–3). Thus it is that in July 645 we find Maximus and Pyrrhus engaged in a theological dispute on the topics of activities and wills, which was subsequently recorded either by the Confessor himself or by a supporter (Booth 2013: 285–7). Not surprisingly, we find that Maximus won the dispute and, moreover, that his opponent, realizing the error of his ways, went to Rome, where he anathematized the *Ekthesis* and was received by the dyothelite pope Theodore I (642–49), who had connections with Palestine and Sophronius (Ekonomou 2007: 92–8). Maximus' engagement with an ex-patriarch of Constantinople and his vindication of his own theological position testify to his increasing stature in the monothelite debate (Boudignon 2007: 256–65), and, as Jankowiak plausibly suggests, to his plan of ensuring orthodoxy in the West to replace what had been lost in the East because of preoccupation with Arab invasions (Jankowiak 2009: 220–1).

Maximus' strong stand against imperial documents dictating one or two activities or wills was followed by Pope Martin in the Lateran Synod, convened in October 649 to condemn both the *Ekthesis* and the *Typos* (Conte 1989). Although Maximus proclaimed it one of the 'holy six councils'—thereby claiming for it ecumenical status (*Opusc*. 11, PG 91. 137C–140B)—it was convened without imperial sanction and, in Booth's words, this 'underscored a blatant usurpation of imperial prerogative that did not, it seems, go unnoticed in the East' (Booth 2013: 293). It has been suggested that Maximus was the author of the proceedings of the synod, and that they had been composed in Greek beforehand and were then translated into Latin by the Byzantine monks who came to Rome with him after being displaced by the troubles in the East (Riedinger 1977, 1982, 1985; Sansterre 1980: 117–19)—a veritable monastic 'collectif' in the eyes of Boudignon (p. 7) 2007. Maximus' name appears in the subscriptions to the *libellus* included in the proceedings of the council, as well as the names of two monks called Anastasius, perhaps the disciple and the apocrisiarius, although we cannot be sure that any of the trio was present. Because of its anathematization of three patriarchs of Constantinople (Sergius, Pyrrhus, and Paul), the Lateran Synod encountered a very angry reception in the eastern capital (Hovorun 2008: 83–6) which culminated in the arrest of the synod's proponents, Pope Martin (charged with treason; Alexakis 1996: 20–1), Maximus, and his disciples (Allen–Neil 2002: 19–21), and their subsequent trials, exiles, and deaths. Although Maximus was not mentioned at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 680/1, no doubt to avoid embarrassing the imperial government so soon after his condemnation and martyrdom, the doctrine of the two wills in Christ, so vigorously upheld by the Confessor, Martin, and their followers, was nevertheless vindicated at the Council, although the monothelite doctrine had a brief revival under the emperor Philippikos Bardanes (711–13).

The 'show trials' of Pope Martin I and Maximus before the senate in Constantinople after the Lateran Synod can only be understood in the context of the crisis facing Byzantium in the form of Muslim invasions (Haldon 1985; Brandes 1998). The trials were designed by the senate to shift the blame for the general crisis onto their dyothelite opponents and to present them as criminals (Brandes 1998: 212). Once Maximus, in particular, was out of the way, the imperial government could turn its attention to thwarting the influence of the eastern monks in the West, a

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process that was aided by the re-establishment of communion between the patriarchates of Constantinople and Rome (Jankowiak 2009: 310).

Significant Others

To appreciate Maximus' life and times we need to consider some significant others in his life, his doctrinal struggles, and ultimately his death. The first of these is the monastic group around John Moschus, a Cilician born around 550 (Chadwick 1974), who, together with his disciple and lifelong companion Sophronius, appears to have visited Egyptian monasteries under the reign of Tiberius (578–82) (Allen 2009: 16–17; Booth 2013: 44–5). Author of an influential monastic work, the *Spiritual Meadow*, John and, later, his anti-Chalcedonian followers, hard-core monastics known as the Eukratades (Chadwick 1974; Boudignon 2007: 253), were instrumental in resisting imperial compromise on doctrinal issues. After fleeing the approach of the Persians, Moschus and Sophronius ended up in Alexandria, where they became intimates of the Chalcedonian patriarch, John the Almsgiver (610–20), whose biography they wrote jointly (Allen 2009: 18). Through Sophronius, whom Maximus seems to have met in North Africa in the 620s in the company of Greek monks devoted to Moschus (d. *c.*634: Louth 1998; Jankowiak–Booth 2015), there developed a long-lasting master–student relationship (although, as we shall see in the hostile Syriac tradition of Maximus' life, the relationship (p. 8) was the other way around). Sophronius' fight on behalf of Chalcedonian orthodoxy and in particular against monoenergism was to be carried on, with refined terminology and argumentation, by Maximus (Allen 2009: 21).

Two men named Anastasius played a critical role in Maximus' life. These were Anastasius the monk/disciple and Anastasius the apocrisiarius (papal legate). In addition, Maximus had a number of supporters among dyothelite monks and state officials.

It appears that in 617/8 Maximus met an African monk, Anastasius (Allen–Neil 2002: 70–1; Jankowiak–Booth 2015), who became a close disciple and followed him to his death, as we learn in several of the biographical documents enumerated in the References to this chapter. From Anastasius we have a letter to the monks of Cagliari (*CPG* 7725) on the topic of monothelitism. He underwent the two trials of Maximus and was exiled with him (Larchet 2013: 82–3), although he did not suffer the same mutilation as his master and the apocrisiarius. The disciple died on 22 or 24 July 662 at or in transit to Souania (Allen–Neil 2002: 25).

We do not know where Maximus met Anastasius the apocrisiarius, who was also a monk (Lilie 1999: 79–80 nr. 238). Like other *apocrisiarii* in the Byzantine capital, Anastasius reacted negatively to the publication of the *Typos* and was relegated to Trebizond, where he remained for several years. According to the second recension of the Greek *Life* (PG 90. 85D–88A), Anastasius was arrested with Maximus and Anastasius the disciple in Rome for his stand against monothelitism, but this document is not reliable. In any case, the apocrisiarius was in exile in Mesembria sometime before August 656 (Allen–Neil 2002: 88–101). Although he was not present at the first trial, at the second trial Anastasius was condemned, suffered mutilation like Maximus (his tongue and right hand being cut off), and was also exiled to Lazica, where he died on 11 October 666. In the year before his death, the apocrisiarius wrote a letter to Theodosius of Gangra (*CPG* 7733, see the section titled 'Sources for the Life of Maximus, and a Possible Chronological Reconstruction'), asking for assistance in the vicissitudes of his various exiles (subsequently to Bouculus, Thacyria, and other places; Allen–Neil 2002: 25–6; Larchet 2013: 83–6).

Pope Martin I (649–53) had also been apocrisiarius in Constantinople at the time of the publication of the *Typos* in 648. On their resistance to the document, the *apocrisiarii* were forced to leave the capital, and Martin returned to Rome, just in time to succeed Pope Theodore. Instead of seeking the customary imperial approval for his elevation to the papacy, Martin convened the Lateran Synod, secure in the knowledge that he had the support of Maximus and a huge number of eastern dyothelite monks in the cause for orthodoxy. As we have seen, Martin and other prominent proponents of the synod incurred imperial displeasure for their efforts, were arrested in Rome, and taken to Constantinople. Martin was subjected to the same 'show trial' as Maximus and the Anastasii in 653 and condemned to death, although this sentence was subsequently commuted to exile in Cherson. Martin's letters and an eyewitness account (Allen–Neil 2002: 148–71) detail his sufferings there for two years before his death on 16 September 655 (Neil 2006).

One of the biographical documents that has come down to us is the *Commemoration* composed in late 668 or early 669 by the poorly educated Theodore Spudaeus, in which (p. 9) he relates the sufferings in exile of Pope

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Martin I (649–55), Maximus, the two Anastasii, and their supporters in the dyothelite cause, brothers Theodore and Euprepius, imperial chief bakers who financed the campaign (Neil 2006: 95; and *Narr*. 1, Neil 2006: 166). The brothers were exiled to Cherson shortly before Martin, and Euprepius died there on 26 October 655 (Neil 2006: 95). Theodore Spudaeus relates how he and his brother Theodosius of Gangra (the addressee of the letter of Anastasius the apocrisiarius) made the long trek to the Caucasus to visit Martin in exile, only to find that the pope was already dead.

Works of Maximus

The works of Maximus have received increasing scholarly attention over the past two decades (Van Deun 1998–99, 2009; Knežević 2012), a testimony to the stature he has attained, not only as a historical figure, but also as a theologian and spiritual writer. His *c.*fifty letters (*CPG* 7699), most of which cannot be dated with certainty, demonstrate how well connected he was: his addressees include bishops, clergy, abbots, monks, imperial officials like *cubicularii* and *sacellarii*, in various locations, to whom Maximus writes, also from various locations. His monumental work *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* (*Q.Thal., CPG* 7688) is an exposition on scriptural interpretation, while shorter works, *Questions and Doubts* (*QD, CPG* 7689), *Questions to Theopemptus* (*Q.Theop., CPG* 7696), *Exposition on Psalm 59* (*In ps. LIX, CPG* 7690), and *On the Lord's Prayer (Or.dom*., *CPG* 7691), also deal with the same topic.

The *Small Works* (*Opusc., CPG* 7696) are twenty-seven theological and doctrinal short pieces on topics like activities and wills, including definitions of theological and christological terms such as 'distinction', 'union', 'quality', 'property', 'difference', 'essence', 'nature', 'hypostasis', and 'person'. Similar are the *Two Centuries on the Theology and the Incarnation* (*Th.oec*., *CPG* 7694), while the *Dispute with Pyrrhus* (*DP, CPG* 7698) is an extensive dialogue on the subject of wills and operations.

In the following category we encounter the Confessor's spiritual works: *On the Ascetic Life* (*LA, CPG* 7692), a dialogue between two monastics on the ascetic life; *Four Centuries on Love* (*Car*., *CPG* 7693), which constitutes four hundred sayings on the ascetic life; *Mystagogy* (*Myst., CPG* 7704), a work on liturgical theology and symbols in which the influence of Ps-Dionysius can be seen (cf. Laird 2015), and scholia on Ps-Dionysius (*CPG* 7708).

Next we have two sets of *Ambigua*, or explications of difficult passages in works of the Fathers. *Amb.Io.* deals with difficulties in Gregory of Nazianzen, and includes a refutation of Origenism, while *Amb.Th.* comments on difficult passages in Ps-Dionysius and Gregory Nazianzen (both *CPG* 7705).

In a category of its own, we have the *Computus ecclesiasticus* (*CPG* 7606), which relies on Alexandrian rather than Byzantine chronology and includes chronological tables.

(p. 10) In addition to these works there are short pieces surviving in a variety of manuscripts (*CPG* 7707), fragments and scholia in *catenae* and other works, including the *Doctrina Patrum*. The Greek texts in the anti-monothelite florilegium preserved in the acta of the *Lateran Synod* have also been attributed to Maximus (Riedinger 1982: 118).[7]

Finally, a Georgian *Life of the Virgin* is attributed to the Confessor; it was probably composed in the seventh century by someone conversant with the Marian traditions of Palestine and Constantinople, and, although its authenticity has been disputed, there seems to be no reason not to follow the traditional attribution to Maximus (Shoemaker 2012: 13; Khoperia 2015; cf. Booth forthcoming, who argues that it is a tenth-century work).

Noteworthy in this short account of Maximus' works is the influence of Ps-Dionysius and Maximus' refutation of Origenism (Benevich et al. 2007; Benevich 2009; Plested 2015). The Confessor's role as an interpreter of Ps-Dionysius has been hailed as one of his most significant contributions to the history of Christian thought (Pelikan 1982: 398); Maximus accepted Ps-Dionysius' theology as well as his philosophy, liturgical theology, and his view of the cosmos (Louth 1996: 29). With regard to 'Origenism', which had been so prevalent in monastic circles, even though Maximus refuted it (especially in *Amb.Io.* 7), he was able to save its ascetical richness while weeding out some of its more questionable aspects (Louth 1996: 24–5).

Sources for the Life of Maximus, and a Possible Chronological Reconstruction

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This chapter will not detail the chronology of Maximus' works, because this was done by Sherwood in his influential date-list (1952), which was significantly revised by Jankowiak and Booth (2015). Instead I shall use the works as far as possible to supplement the biographical and hagiographical documents.

I begin with the Greek sources for the life of Maximus. There are three recensions of the *Vita* and their relationship is very vexed (Devreesse 1928; Neil 2001). In addition we have various epitomized *Lives*, passions, and documents which were integrated into the three recensions in various ways (Allen 1985: 12; Roosen 2010). Also to be mentioned are the letters of Maximus, some of which contain biographical and/or chronological information;[8] these still await a critical edition. Many of these sources for Maximus' biography have been inaccessible, blighted by inaccurate chronology, ancient and modern hagiographical bias, and the lack of modern critical editions of their texts. For example, (p. 11) the work of M. D. Muretov, who in 1913–14 published in instalments partial editions of documents pertaining to the Greek, Georgian, and Slavonic traditions of the life of the Confessor (see Benevich 2015), had little impact because the work remained difficult to access. Another significant name in the quest for the biography of Maximus is S. L. Epifanovich, who in 1917 published a number of epitomized biographies of the Confessor and some of Maximus' works themselves. Again the inaccessibility of this research impeded subsequent investigation into the biography of Maximus (Allen 1985: 11–12). Another name that looms large in research on the biography of Maximus is that of R. Devreesse, who was the first to detect that, behind the text of what is still today with misleading simplicity referred to as the *Life* of Maximus (*BHG* 1234), there lurked what he decided to call three recensions (Devreesse 1928).

Until the recent edition of the third recension (Neil–Allen 2003), only one of these three recensions had been edited, namely the second (PG 90. 68–109), which is of least value. The contributions to the question of the inter-relationship of the three recensions by Devreesse (1928), Lackner (1967), Bracke (1980), and van Dieten (1972) have been contradictory. Bracke in particular relied on the epitome BHG 1233m as the source for the oldest version of the *Life* (van Dieten 1982; Allen 1985: 15–17), while Lackner, followed by Bracke, posited the existence of an *Urpassio*, or archetype, composed close to Maximus' death, from which the three recensions were composed. It is now agreed that the earliest possible date for the *Life* in its present forms is the late tenth century (Neil–Allen 2003: 24; Roosen 2010), the *terminus post quem* for the *Vita* B of Theodore Studite (BHG 1755), parts of which Lackner plausibly demonstrated were taken over to supply an account of Maximus' early years, contained in all three recensions (Lackner 1967: 294–8; Roosen 2010: 446–51). The superior value of the *Passiones* of Maximus over against the later *Vitae* has also been argued for (Roosen 2010). The question of the interrelationship of the various Greek biographical documents will be further elucidated in Roosen's forthcoming edition of the second recension, but suffice it to say here that the place of the epitomized *Lives* in the tradition is also fraught (Allen 1985: 19; Roosen 2010).

It is important to note that all three recensions depend on at least three of four documents: Maximus' *DP* (PG 91. 288–353), *RM, DB*, and the *Ep.Max.*, the last three having received a recent critical edition and translation (Allen–Neil 2002: 48–74, 76–123). These are discussed below. However, as already said, the use of the documents in the three recensions differs. For example, recension 3 contains verbatim the *RM* and the *DB*, but in reverse chronological order. Furthermore, there are indications that the author(s) of this recension deliberately manipulated the sources (Neil–Allen 2003: 24–5).

The recent edition of seven biographical documents, some of which have been mentioned and are reliably dated, has advanced our knowledge of the imperial reaction against monothelitism after 646, a date after which we have very few surviving works of Maximus (Louth 1996: 192; Allen–Neil 2002: 21–2). With these documents we are on somewhat surer ground for the events and chronology of Maximus' later life. They are:

1. *Record of the Trial (RM)* (*CPG* 7736), an eyewitness account of the events of the trial of Maximus and his disciple Anastasius in Constantinople in 655, in which (p. 12) Maximus is sentenced to exile in Bizya and his disciple Anastasius to Perberis. No more precise date for this trial than the year 655 can be given. Various authors have been suggested for the document, ranging from both Anastasii to Theodore Spudaeus and Theodosius of Gangra, but the question must remain open (Allen–Neil 2002: 35–6, 48–74).
2. *Dispute at Bizya between Maximus and Theodosius, bishop of Caesarea Bithynia (DB)* (*CPG* 7735), which took place during Maximus' exile in Bizya (north-west of Constantinople) in August 656; it was written within a year of the events described and also contains an account of further discussions held at Rhegium and Selymbria in the following month. The document was written in either 656 or 657, and, like the *RM*, its

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authorship is disputed (Allen–Neil 2002: 36–7, 76–119).
3. *Letter of Maximus to Anastasius the monk, his disciple (Ep.Max.)* (*CPG* 7701), dated 19 April 658 while both were in exile in Perberis (Thrace). The letter gives a verbatim account of a discussion between Maximus and representatives of an unnamed patriarch who has been identified as Peter of Constantinople (654–66) (Bracke 1980: 66). It can now be securely dated to 19 April 658 (Allen–Neil 2002: 37–8, 120–3).
4. *Letter of Anastasius to the monks of Cagliari (Ep.mon.)* (*CPG* 7725), traditionally ascribed to Anastasius the disciple (Allen–Neil 2002: 39–40), seeks the help of monks in Rome and encourages them in their continued resistance to monothelitism. Dated after 19 April 658 (Allen–Neil 2002: 39–40, 124–31), it survives only in a Latin translation.
5. *Letter of Anastasius the apocrisiarius to Theodore of Gangra (Ep.Anast.)* (*CPG* 7733), accompanied by *testimonia* attributed to Hippolytus, bishop of Portus Romanus, and syllogisms, probably composed by Anastasius. It was written not long before Anastasius' death in exile in Lazica on 11 October 666 (Allen–Neil 2002: 40–2, 132–47; see Neil 2015).
6. *Commemoration* (*Hypom.)* (*CPG* 7968), a record of the sufferings in exile of Pope Martin I, Maximus, the two Anastasii, and their associates Theodore and Euprepius, all martyrs for the dyothelite cause. It was composed in late 668 or early 669 by their supporter, Theodore Spudaeus (Allen–Neil 2002: 41–2, 148–71).
7. *Against the people of Constantinople* (*Adu.Const.*) (*CPG* 7740), an anonymous later piece of invective composed by a monk who was a vehement supporter of Maximus. If it is not the work of Anastasius the apocrisiarius, its author may be connected with the compilers of the *Doctrina Patrum* (Allen–Neil 2002: 43, 172–5).

These documents are indispensable for examining Maximus' final years, his exiles, and death, as well as the fates of his companions, and give us a much surer historical footing than do any of the *Lives* or epitomes. The Greek *Lives*, following the hagiographical (p. 13) account of the early years of Theodore the Studite, situate Maximus' noble origins in Constantinople, where he eventually became chief secretary of imperial records (a position that in fact came into being later: Lackner 1971). Subsequently, Maximus became a monk in the monastery of Chrysopolis (modern Scutari) and reluctantly ended up as its abbot. This exemplary life was followed by Maximus' travels to the West to combat monothelitism, and then to Africa, followed by a sojourn in Rome. In varying detail the *Lives* then recount Maximus' trials, exile, and death. Because of his mutilation and subsequent tribulations, Maximus was accorded the title 'Confessor' for the faith.

If the aspects of the Greek tradition of Maximus' biography (or, better said, hagiography) and its components were not complicated enough, we have also a much earlier Syriac *Life*, preserved in a late seventh-century manuscript, which is hostile to him and gives the Confessor a completely different pedigree, including a Palestinian rather than a Constantinopolitan background (Brilliantov 1917: 2; Brock 1973; Jankowiak–Booth 2015). This account purports to be written by Gregory or George of Resh'aina, a member of the clergy of Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem, and to contain eyewitness reports. Its title announces the tenor of the narrative: 'The history concerning the wicked Maximus of Palestine who blasphemed against his creator, and whose tongue was cut out' (Brock 1973: 301). According to the clearly anti-dyothelite composer of this text, Maximus was born of a Samaritan and a Persian slave-girl, and became a Palestinian monk, while Sophronius assumed a subordinate role to him. Maximus is said to follow or consort with Origenists, pagans, and Nestorians. Unfortunately, the ending of the short document is missing.

While we are not unused to such dichotomous characterizations of prominent figures across ancient confessional dividing lines—for example, *Kaiserkritik* in the immediate post-Chalcedonian tradition, or representations of the sixth-century empress Theodora—the Syriac *Life* of Maximus has tended to polarize scholars, meeting with both negativity (e.g.Van Deun 2009: 105; cf. Jankowiak–Booth 2015) and unqualified acceptance (e.g. Garrigues 1976: 410–56). Telling against Maximus' Constantinopolitan provenance is the fact that his philosophical position, especially with regard to neo-Platonism, links him more readily to the Alexandrian rather than to the Constantinopolitan tradition (Boudignon 2004: 13–22), while his responses to Origenism make more sense in the context of Palestinian monasticism, where the Origenist controversy had raged in the sixth century (Booth 2013: 149). A Palestinian connection also explains more readily Maximus' relationship with the circle of John Moschus and Sophronius. Conversely, a Palestinian origin makes it more difficult to credit Maximus' relationships with high-profile officials of the court in Constantinople and elsewhere in the Byzantine world, such as Peter *illustris* (Jankowiak–Booth 2015) and George, the eparch of Africa (Blowers forthcoming). This has had to be explained away by

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speculating a brief sojourn in Constantinople (Boudignon 2004: 35–6; Booth 2013: 155).

It will be obvious that reconciling a later hagiographical tradition with a purportedly early account poses a serious methodological problem in reconstructing the life of the Confessor (Louth 1996: 199 n.11), and few of his letters can be dated with certainty. (p. 14) However, below I shall attempt to reconstruct a tentative timeline for his life, according to the sources we have available and their reliability. It should be noted here that the biographical materials contained in the Georgian tradition are translations from the tenth to twelfth centuries based on Greek originals, and therefore support the Graeco-Latin, not the Syriac, tradition (Khoperia 2009: 41; cf. Khoperia 2015). Gaps in the chronology of Maximus' life in the Syriac biography are striking—there is a lacuna of about forty years from his entry into the Palaia Lavra until his discipleship under Sophronius—as are the fabrications, borrowings, and hagiographical gambits in the Greek *Life* and other Greek biographical documents.

Tentative Timeline

579/80: Birth of Maximus (*RM*, Allen–Neil 2002: 70–1).
610s: Maximus became monk in Palaia Lavra (speculative date; *Syriac Life*, Brock 1973: 315).
617/8: Maximus met the African Anastasius, his future disciple and lifelong companion (*RM*, Allen–Neil 70–1; for Anastasius' African provenance see Syriac *Life*, Brock 1973: 317–8).
Post 626 until at least 630: Avar-Slav siege of Constantinople forces Maximus to flee his monastic community in Asia Minor and go to North Africa, where he interacts with Sophronius and the Eukratades.
632: Maximus was in Africa; objected to forced baptism of Jews (*Ep*. 8; Devreesse 1937). Also *Epp*. 8, 28, 30 from this time (Jankowiak–Booth 2015; Blowers forthcoming).
633 or 634: Maximus in Carthage (*Ep*. 14 to Peter *illustris*; Blowers forthcoming).
Late 634: Maximus becomes disciple of Sophronius in Palestine (Syriac *Life*; Brock 1973: 315–6).
First half of 636: Maximus' 'doctrine' condemned by Council of Cyprus (Booth 2013: 239–41).
*c.*640: Maximus voices publicly his opposition to monoenergism and monothelitism.
641 at latest: Return to Africa (Jankowiak–Booth 2015).
July 645: Dispute in Carthage with deposed monothelite patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus (Booth 2013: 285–7; see Jankowiak–Booth 2015).
646: Maximus goes to Rome (Syriac *Life*, Brock 1973: 315–6).
October 649: Lateran Synod (Riedinger 1977, 1982, 1985; Conte 1989).
653: Arrest of Pope Martin in Rome, exiled in 654, died 16 Sept. 655 (Neil 2006: 96). Maximus goes to Constantinople under arrest.
655: Trial of Maximus and Anastasius the Monk (Allen–Neil 2002: 35). Exile to Bizya (Thrace).
August 656: Dispute with Theodosius, bishop of Caesarea Bithynia in Bizya (*DB*; Allen–Neil 2002: 22–5).
(p. 15) 662: Second trial in Constantinople; Maximus and the two Anastasii exiled to Lazica (now Georgia) (Allen–Neil 2002: 25–6).
13 August 662: Death of Maximus at a fort called Schemaris (Muretov 1917; Allen–Neil 2002: 134–5).[9]

Suggested Reading

For a revision of Sherwood's 1952 date-list of Maximus' works, the reader is referred to Jankowiak–Booth 2015. The different genres of Maximus' writings are discussed by Van Deun 2015; Brock 1973 provides the text of the Syriac *Vita.* Neil–Allen 2003 contains an edition and translation of the Greek *Vita Maximi* in its third recension. Neil 2001 examines the provenance and dating of this text and the other two recensions, revisiting Lackner 1967.

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Notes:

([1]) Winkelmann 1987; Knežević 2012: 137–47; Jankowiak 2009; Booth 2013. See Hovorun 2015.

([2]) Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 6121; ed. de Boor 1883/1: 330. 5–11, trans. Mango–Scott 1997: 461; recension 2 of *Vita Maximi* (Greek), PG 90. 77C; recension 3, ed. and trans. Neil–Allen 2003: 54–5.

([3]) Lange 2012: 531–622; Allen 2013: 198; Booth 2013: 202–5, 221, 237.

([4]) Winkelmann 2001: 66 nr. 27; Hovorun 2008: 67–72; Jankowiak 2009: 89–96; Allen 2009: 28, 168–73; Booth 2013: 205–22, 327.

([5]) Although several scholars have argued that Maximus had reservations: summary in Jankowiak 2009: 104–5 n.340.

([6]) Winkelmann 2001: 85–6 nr. 50; Hovorun 2008: 73–6; Jankowiak 2009: 150–9; Allen 2009: 33–4, 208–17.

([7]) Alexakis 1996: 26–31 gives a thorough analysis of the florilegia used at this Council.

([8]) Sahas 2003: 100–10, relying on Sherwood's date-list; Jankowiak–Booth 2015; Blowers forthcoming.

([9]) However, Andrey Vinogradov now argues for a location either in Omarishar or another fortress in the Upper

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Kodori, a river in modern Abkazia (Vinogradov 2013; see Benevich 2015). See also Larchet 2013, who tries to reconstruct the exiles of Maximus and the two Anastasii on the basis of archaeological evidence.

Pauline Allen

Pauline Allen is professor and director of the Centre for Early Christian Studies at Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, and honorary researcher at University of Pretoria and Sydney College of Divinity.

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A New Date-List of the Works of Maximus the Confessor

Marek Jankowiak and Phil Booth

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This chapter updates the still-standard date-list of Polycarp Sherwood. Since its publication this date-list has undergone some important modification, particularly in Jean-Claude Larchet's introductions to the French translations of Maximus' *Letters* and *Opuscula*. Both scholars – and those who follow them – have nevertheless depended on the Greek hagiographic corpus of Maximus' *Life*, and have read Maximus' subsequent corpus (esp. the *Letters* and *Opuscula*)through the narrative provided therein. This has now been discredited from various directions. The question, therefore, of the dating of Maximus' earliest works is once again open to discussion. Taking the Syriac *Life* as the principal source for Maximus' life, we place his works within a secure historical context, as well as take account of the various chronological revisions which scholars since Sherwood have applied to his later corpus. The new date-list also includes those published works of Maximus which were unknown or unavailable to Sherwood in 1952.

Keywords: Syriac Life of Maximus, date-list, works of Maximus, Polycarp Sherwood, Jean-Claude Larchet

THE works of Maximus the Confessor were arranged chronologically by Polycarp Sherwood in 1952. This masterly work, based on an intimate knowledge of Maximus' oeuvre, would have stood the test of time if the chronological framework on which it was based had not been significantly modified in the course of the last forty years. Sherwood based a significant part of his reasoning—in particular for the earlier works of Maximus—on a narrative of Maximus' Constantinopolitan origins derived from his Greek hagiographic corpus, but this narrative has been progressively undermined, and instead the seventh-century *Syriac Life* has gradually come to be accepted as a crucial, and often strikingly accurate, source for the origins and life of Maximus, despite its polemical purpose and content (see Allen 2015). As a result of this revisionism, Sherwood's chronological framework, as constructed on the basis of the Greek hagiographic corpus, has become obsolete, as too has the attempt to fit certain prosopographical and topographical details contained within Maximus' own corpus (in particular in the *Letters*) into that same framework. At the same time, our understanding of the monoenergist and monothelite crises has been transformed by the publication of new editions, especially in the CCSG, and translations (e.g. Allen–Neil 1999; Allen–Neil 2002; Neil–Allen 2003; Neil 2006; Allen 2009). These have allowed for a reconsideration of the chronology and context of crucial events (Jankowiak 2009), of the theological origins of monoenergist and monothelite doctrines (Uthemann 1997; Lange 2012), and of the wider ideological and political imperatives and contexts (esp. Brandes 1998; Ohme 2008; Booth 2013). There are, therefore, more than ample grounds for reconsidering the chronology of Maximus' entire corpus.

(p. 20) The Chronological Framework

Our chronology of Maximus' life is based upon the *Syriac Life* and on information that can be gleaned from his works or other contemporary sources describing his opposition to the imperial church. Maximus was born in 579/80

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(*RM*, ed. Allen–Neil 1999: 47. 450) in Ḥeṣfin in the Golan Heights (*Syriac Life* 1). The *Syriac Life* describes in detail his Palestinian background and childhood, until his entrance as a novice to the Palaia Laura—also known as the monastery of Chariton or Souka—in the Judean Desert at the age of 10 (*Syriac Life* 1–5). It is, however, silent about the next four decades of his life. When the narrative recommences (*Syriac Life* 6–7), Maximus has become the disciple of Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem from late 634 (cf. *Epp.* 8 and 13, where the relationship seems well established in 632–33). Sophronius was a Damascene and a Palestinian monk who, along with his spiritual master John Moschus, is known to have retreated at some point before 610 to Alexandria in the face of the advancing Persian troops, and there to have become active at the side of the Chalcedonian patriarch John the Almsgiver (*Prologue to the Spiritual Meadow*, with Booth 2013: 49–53). Maximus' later correspondence reveals his acquaintance with several Alexandrians, and we might suppose that he too was there in this same period (Boudignon 2004: 15–22; see now also *Add.* 34). In 617/8, he met an African, Anastasius, who became his disciple and closest collaborator (*RM* 47. 453; *Syriac Life* 19). Anastasius was once the *notarios* of the grandmother of the emperor Constans II (*DB*, ed. Allen–Neil 1999: 141. 746–7), that is, either Fabia Eudocia, the wife of Emperor Heraclius until her death in 612, herself also of African origin, or perhaps the wife of Heraclius' cousin Nicetas (Boudignon 2004: 31–4). Where the pair met we do not know—one can think of Africa or Alexandria—but at this stage Maximus was eminent enough an ascetic to acquire a former imperial *notarios* as his disciple.

The itinerary of Maximus during the Persian war is uncertain. The letters that he wrote to several eastern correspondents in the summer of 632 speak of a barbarian threat that he had fled, no doubt the Persian conquest of Palestine (614) and Egypt (619), accompanied by unrest among Arab tribes (see below on *Epp.* 8, 28, 30). By 632, however, he was certainly in North Africa, which had become the rallying point for refugees fleeing the Persians, such as John Moschus, who is attested there around 630 (*Spiritual Meadow* 196, with Booth 2013: 110) and died in Rome in 634 or a little before (*Prologue to the Spiritual Meadow*, with Louth 1998), and Sophronius (*Opusc.* 12, 142A). If Maximus had earlier been in Alexandria, then he may have followed a similar westward route to Moschus and Sophronius, who are said to have visited 'various islands' in their flight from the beleaguered eastern provinces.[1] Indeed, Maximus counts amongst his later correspondents persons on Cyprus (*Ep.* 20; *Opusc.* 1, 7, 10, 19–20) and Crete (*Ep.* 21; cf. (p. 21) *Opusc.* 3, 49C), and it is tempting to suppose that he encountered such persons as he travelled westward in this period.

The *Syriac Life* (7–10) places Maximus back in Palestine around 634, counselling Sophronius, now patriarch of Jerusalem, in the early days of the controversy over the Chalcedonian union with the miaphysites of Egypt in June 633 (see Jankowiak 2009: 84–96; Booth 2013: 205–8). Condemned for his doctrine at the Council of Cyprus, which probably took place in 636 (Jankowiak 2009: 146–9), Maximus spent several years in relative isolation in the East (in Palestine?) before retreating again to North Africa (*Syriac Life* 11–18). From Maximus' own corpus, we can place him in that province in November 641 (*Ep.* 12; and cf. *Computus*). Here he renewed the association of his circle with the prefect George (*Epp.* 1, 11–12, 18, 44–5, B). After George's recall to Constantinople, in which Maximus seems to have played a role, the latter became associated with the patrician and general Gregory (*DP* [288A] and *RM* 17. 53–62). Having defeated the former patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, at a public debate in Carthage in July 645 (*DP* [288A]), Maximus then travelled to Rome (*Syriac Life* 19; cf. *DP* [353A]; *RM* 21.105–16; *Opusc.* 9), where he co-organized the Lateran Council of October 649 and no doubt authored a significant part of its *Acts* (Riedinger 1982, 1985). He probably stayed in Rome at least until the arrest of Pope Martin in June 653; the precise circumstances of his own arrest are unknown, although it perhaps occurred at the same time (so Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 6121). He was then put on trial in Constantinople in 655 and exiled to Bizya in Thrace (*RM*). He resisted imperial overtures to secure his doctrinal approval in 656 and 658 (*DB*;*Ep. ad Anast.*), and perhaps became associated with the revolt of Theodosius, the brother of the emperor Constans II, in 659/60 (Jankowiak 2009: 341–7). Condemned at a general council in 661 or 662,[2] he was flogged, mutilated and exiled to Lazica, where he died on 13 August 662.

Dating the Corpus

The majority of precise chronological indications have been edited out of Maximus' corpus—apparently before it reached Photius in the ninth century (editing of Maximus' letters is mentioned in the *Bibl.*, ed. Henry 1959–77: 157b30–31)—with the following few exceptions:

- *Letter* 7: 2 August, indiction 1 (628 or 643), place unknown.

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- *Letter* 8: Easter or Pentecost of the current indiction 5 (632), from Carthage.
- *Computus*: between 5 October 640 (thirty-first year of Heraclius) and *c.*mid- February 641 (when news of Heraclius' death on 11 January 641 is supposed to have reached Carthage: Grierson 1962), probably in Africa.

(p. 22)
- *Letter* 12: November of the current indiction 15 (641), from Africa.
- *Dispute with Pyrrhus*: July, indiction 3 (645), in Carthage.

These dates allow us to ascertain that Maximus was in Africa in 632 and that, after his return to the East, noted in the *Syriac Life* 18, he returned there in 641 at the latest. But with the exception of these five works, the remainder of Maximus' production can only be dated by internal criteria. We will establish the dates of the individual works in the first instance through mentions of, or allusions to, events that can otherwise be dated or to people that are known to have engaged with Maximus at specific points of time. In the second instance, we will offer an approximate chronological range on the basis of the intellectual context of the work at hand. In certain instances, the latter approach can distinguish earlier from later texts: thus it is evident that Maximus, over the course of his career, changed his mind on such doctrinal issues as, for example, the use of 'one will' or 'one operation' in anthropological contexts, the application of γνώμη to Christ, or the authenticity of certain patristic texts. In contrast to the approach of Sherwood, however, we will wherever possible avoid offering chronological certainties on the basis of the supposed evolution of Maximus' thought. Although this evolution of course occurred, this criterion remains problematic for two reasons: first, it leads to circular reasoning, with individual works being assigned to the assumed periods in Maximus' theological development, and in turn corroborating the chronological framework; and second, it presupposes an explicit, linear development of Maximus' doctrine, so that, for example, monoenergism is *always* acknowledged after 633, or certain words (e.g. ἐνεργητικός, θελητικός) can be used to distinguish earlier from later works (see Sherwood 1952). Thus we discover, for example, that although in the period *c.*640–42 Maximus had voiced his public opposition to monoenergism and monothelitism, both doctrines are a conspicuous absence from a significant group of letters written to the capital in the same period, in connection with the affair of the Alexandrian nuns.

Our objective is therefore threefold: first, to undo some of the chronological and contextual precision of Sherwood, whose date-list depended on the now discredited Constantinopolitan tradition of Maximus' origins and its various modern embellishments; second, to establish as many fixed chronological points as possible for Maximus' various works, or to suggest reasonable contexts or chronological ranges within which each might be interpreted; and third, to provide a more secure basis from which to understand the evolving concerns of Maximus over the course of his career.

The *Letters*, *Opuscula*, and *Additamenta*: Problems of Transmission and Edition

The vast majority of Maximus' works that can be assigned a more or less tentative date belong to his *Letters* and the so-called *Opuscula*. Research on these texts is, however, (p. 23) marred by the lack of a modern edition. We regret that the long-announced and much-anticipated edition in the CCSG is still not available. Our conclusions remain therefore provisional and will have to be modified when the edition has been published. In the meantime, we have used the edition published by François Combefis in 1675 and reprinted in PG 91. 9–285 and 364–649. Although Combefis' work is a product of outstanding scholarship by the standards of the time, it is based on a limited number of manuscripts and does not always establish the best available text (see, for example, *Epp.* 8 and 14). It is particularly treacherous in designating the names of the recipients, which are sometimes contradicted in the manuscripts and in many cases can be improved.

The edition of Combefis imposed the division of the corpus of Maximus' short works into *Letters* and *Opuscula*, and established a provisional (but now canonical) order of works within each of these two groups. Neither of these corresponds to the shape in which these texts have been transmitted in the manuscripts. Many of the *Opuscula* are in reality letters, and they are not transmitted as a distinct body of texts; they seem, however, as a rule to be later than the *Letters*, which end *c.*641/2. The sequence of the *Letters* and *Opuscula* in the manuscripts (see, e.g. Van Deun 1991: lii–lv and cviii–cxi) does not suggest any original arrangement of Maximus' short works; the future edition will no doubt address this question. It seems, however, improbable that there was ever a single canonical collection of Maximus' *Letters*.

A precious early witness to the transmission of Maximus' works, in particular the *Letters*, is the ninth-century

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summary compiled by Photius in codices 192A–195 of his *Bibliotheca*. All the works which the patriarch lists can be identified, more or less confidently, with extant texts, with the exception of a second letter to 'the monk Sophronius surnamed Eucratas' (*codex* 192B, ed. Henry 1959–77: 157b11–12; cf. *Ep.* 8). The text of Photius also allows us to name the anonymous abbess to whom Maximus addressed *Letter* 11 as Iania, no doubt identical with the 'Ioannia' whom *Letter* 12 identifies as the abbess of one of two Alexandrian monasteries mentioned therein. Photius' ignorance of many of Maximus' works shows that they have never circulated as a single corpus; his Roman contemporary, Anastasius the Librarian, knew some writings of Maximus, which now survive only in his Latin translation (see *Ep. ad Thalassium* and *Opusc.* 12).

In 1917, Sergei Leont'evich Epifanovich published in Kiev thirty-three texts attributed to Maximus in the manuscripts, even though he doubted Maximus' authorship of many of the texts he edited (see *CPG* 7707). The First World War, the Russian revolution, and the death of Epifanovich in the following year made this edition notoriously difficult to obtain. Eighteen of these texts have now been re-edited in the magisterial doctoral thesis of Bram Roosen (2001), the conclusions of which we have endeavoured to integrate. Those texts which Roosen identifies as genuine texts of Maximus we include under the title *Additamenta*, preserving the numbering of Epifanovich and *CPG*. However, we have excluded the composite *Opusculum* 23 attributed by Combefis to Maximus but which Roosen regards as spurious (Roosen 2001/3: 697–701, 715–6, 825–9).

(p. 24) Some Prosopographical Notes

Before moving to the date-list itself, it is expedient to deal with some recurrent prosopographical problems related to some of the more prominent recipients of Maximus' correspondence. These persons are:

1. John Cubicularius: John is the recipient of Maximus' *Letters* 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 27, 44–5, and what we have called *Letter D*; as discussed below, he does not appear to be the recipient of *Letter* 24/43. Of these, *Letter* 12 alone has a firm date—soon after November 641—although at least *Letters* 44–5 belong in the same general context. It seems certain that the other letters precede these, and that John's association with Maximus was at this stage well established; indeed, it is now evident from *Letter D* that Maximus knew John before his election to the rank of the *cubicularius*. The origins of that acquaintance are nevertheless obscure. John's attachment to the imperial court in Constantinople, and Maximus' association with him, cannot be used to support the notion that Maximus was from Constantinople. John Cubicularius is the only certain contact of Maximus at the imperial court, and the precise nature and origins of their apparent friendship must remain unclear. Some of Maximus' letters to John can be read as attempts to ingratiate himself with a powerful contact at the court, rather than evidence of an abiding closeness.

2. Constantine Sacellarius, or rather ἀπὸ σακελλαρίων (see the full title to *Letter* 5 preserved in *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7 f. 17^{v}: τοῦ αὐτοῦ Κωνσταντίνῳ ἰλλουστρίῳ καὶ ἀπὸ σακελλαρίων, confirmed in Photius, *Bibl., codex* 192B, ed. Henry 1959–77: 157b21–2): Constantine is the recipient of *Letters* 5 and 24/43, the latter dated with some confidence to 628/9. The universal assumption of modern scholarship is that Constantine's official position places him in the capital, so that his association with Maximus is again cited to support the latter's supposed Constantinopolitan origins. But the title *sacellarius* does not demand that Constantine was the imperial *sacellarius*, a top-ranking dignitary and a predecessor of the *sacellarius* who led the trials against Pope Martin in 653 and against Maximus in 655 (Brandes 1998: 160–2). Provincial *sacellarii* are attested in Italy and North Africa (Brandes 2002: 442–9)—see, for example, the *sacellarius* of Peter, general of Numidia, *c.*633 (*RM* 15. 28–9). The rank *illustris* attributed to Constantine also points to the same provinces, since by the seventh century it had virtually disappeared from the East, but was still used in the West (Koch 1903: 43–5).

3. Peter the Illustris: Peter the Illustris is the recipient of *Letters* 13 and 14, and *Opusculum* 12, the last dated to *c.*645. Some scholars have suggested an identification of this Peter the Illustris with the patrician Peter, whose career can be followed in a variety of sources, provided that they all, as seems probable, refer to the same (p. 25) person (Duval 1971; Zuckerman 2002: 173–4). He appears in the *Relatio motionis* as the general of Numidia and is said to have corresponded with Maximus in *c.*633 (above); on an African seal as ἀπὸ ὑπατῶν, patrician and *dux* (Laurent 1962: 85–7 nr 92, an African connection is suggested by the image of Augustine on the obverse); in an African inscription from Telergma in Numidia dated to 636 as *Pe[t]ro patriciho (h)ac Africana probincia* (referring to Numidia or perhaps to the entire Byzantine Africa; see Duval and Février 1969: 259 and 317–20); and in his epitaph at Sbeïtla (Duval 1956: 284–6: *Petrus*

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em(i)n(en)t(issimu)s) where he was buried at the age of 65 and in indiction 10 (probably 651/2 rather than 636/7); he is also identified with the Peter *patricius* to whom Maximus dedicated his *Computus* in 641/2 (below). The identification of this Peter with Maximus' correspondent Peter the Illustris is, however, uncertain, although it has important implications for the dating and understanding of Maximus' texts, as indicated below. On the one hand—as Zuckerman (2002: 173–4) points out in a brief aside—if the Peter of the *Letters* and *Opusculum* 12 was the general and *patricius* who appears elsewhere, he should have been too eminent to bear the more humble title *illustris*, in particular in *Opusculum* 12, by which time Maximus had already dedicated the *Computus* to him using the title *patricius*. On the other hand, however—and assuming that our texts preserve the addressees' proper titles—*Opusculum* 12, in which Maximus begs Peter 'to command to all' (*praecipere omnibus* [144A]) that the ex-patriarch Pyrrhus not be addressed with certain honorific titles, suggests that Peter the Illustris, despite his rank, commands some position of power, as we might expect of our *patricius*. The identification of the two, therefore, must remain tentative but is not impossible. At the least, Peter the Illustris appears as a person of some considerable standing. Once again his title, *illustris*, suggests a western career.

4. Thalassius: Thalassius is the recipient of the *Questions Addressed to Thalassius, Letters* 9, 26, 41–2, *A*, and of the partly extant treatise *On the operations and the wills* (witnessed in *Opusc.* 2 and 3). He appears to be that 'Thalassius the Libyan' or 'Thalassius the African' who authored the Greek *Centuries on Theology* (PG 91. 1428A–1469C), and who is presented in an extant spiritual tale as the leader of the monks at Carthage during the reign of Heraclius (Nau 1902: 84; cf. also *BHG* 1318a). Like Maximus' disciple Anastasius, he seems to have been a bilingual North African, but whether he had resided there all his life is far from clear, in particular if he is also to be identified with that Thalassius who later led the Armenian monks of Renatus at Rome in 649. These monks seem to have been recent immigrants from the East via North Africa (*Acts of the Lateran Council*, Riedinger 1984: 50, 57, with Boudignon 2007: 298). It is therefore possible that Maximus was acquainted with Thalassius for a considerable time.

5. John of Cyzicus: The identification of John is perhaps the most tortuous of those questions which relate to Maximus' known correspondents. Maximus' *Ambigua to John*, of which the Greek is extant, but to which the earliest witness is Eriugena's ninth-century Latin translation, is addressed 'To the most (p. 26) sacred and blessed John, Archbishop of Cyzicus' (πρὸς Ἰωάννην ἀρχιεπίσκοπον Κυζίκου, PG 91. 1061A, or *sanctissimo ac beatissimo archiepiscopo Kyzi Iohanni* in the Latin), and within the preface Maximus states that he had once been in John's presence (Jeauneau 1988: 17. 21–5). The precise place and time of his meeting with John being unknown, it remains problematic to assume on this basis that Maximus had once been in Cyzicus. Even more problematic is the modern identification of 'John Archbishop of Cyzicus' with the 'bishop Curisicius' (Κυρισίκιος) to whom are addressed *Letters* 28 and 29. This addressee was known also to Photius (*Bibl., codex* 192B, 157b16), but the name Curisicius is barely known otherwise. Combefis, followed by most scholars (e.g. Sherwood 1952: 16–20), proposed to emend the addressee from πρὸς Κυρισίκιον ἐπίσκοπον to πρὸς Κυζικηνὸν ἐπίσκοπον (PG 91. 619–620 n.[m]) and thence to identify him with the dedicatee of the *Ambigua to John*. But a bishop of Cyzicus would be called ἐπίσκοπος Κυζίκου or ἐπίσκοπος τῆς Κυζικηνῶν μητροπόλεως, and not Κυζικηνὸς ἐπίσκοπος (see e.g. the subscriptions in the *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*). Combefis' emended Κυζικινός can, therefore, only be understood as an ethnonym, which makes one think of the Ἰωάννης ὁ Κυζικηνός who appears in John Moschus' *Spiritual Meadow* (3064D–3065A) but who, however, is not otherwise known to have been a bishop, and who is there located in Palestine. This conundrum does not seem possible to solve, and it is sounder to avoid collapsing the evidence so as to support Maximus' long association with an 'archbishop of Cyzicus', and even his presence in the same city.

6. Marinus: To one Marinus are addressed a series of works: (in chronological order) *Letter* 20, *Opuscula* 7, 20, 10, 1, 2(?), 19. Within these, we can trace the progression of Marinus through the clerical hierarchy, for in *Letter* 20 he is a monk; in *Opusculum* 7 a deacon; and in *Opusculum* 20 and the remaining texts a priest. Sherwood (1952: 34) hesitated over the identification as one person, since he placed *Opusculum* 20 before *Opusculum* 7, which is in fact improbable. Therefore no impediment remains to thinking that Maximus had a single correspondent Marinus. The title of *Opusculum* 7 states that it was sent to Cyprus; that of *Opusculum* 10 puts Marinus 'in Cyprus'; and that of *Opusculum* 1 calls him 'most holy priest and *oikonomos* of the most holy metropolis of Constantia of the island of Cyprus'.[3] Assuming that Marinus had always been on Cyprus, it is possible that Maximus met him there during his first westward retreat during the Persian invasion; but his first extant correspondence with him nevertheless dates to *c.*636 (*Ep.* 20). It seems that Marinus might be a close associate of the influential archbishop Arcadius of Cyprus (on whom see Jankowiak 2009: 139–49, and

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Booth 2013: 261 n.138); see esp. *Opusc.* 20 (PG 91. 245B–D), with Jankowiak 2009: 197–9.
(p. 27) **7.** Theocharistus: The addressee of the *Mystagogy*. He seems to be the same as that 'most holy priest Theocharistus, brother of the [Italian] exarch', probably Plato (645–9), who appears in *RM* (21. 108–9), in the context of Maximus' presence in Rome; cf. also *Acts of the Lateran Council* (Riedinger 1984: 57), perhaps listing our Theocharistus amongst the signatories to the petition of eastern monks therein submitted. If this is also the 'most magnificent *illustris* lord Theocharistus' who appears in *Letter* 44 (644D) as the bearer of a missive from North Africa to the capital, in the period *c.*640–42, then Maximus must also have known him in North Africa. The rank of *illustris* points, again, to western origins. (See also Boudignon 2004: 38–41.)
8. Theodosius of Gangra: Addressee of a single Maximian work excerpted in *Opusculum* 26a, *Additamentum* 20, and *Additamentum* 38. He is also the recipient of a letter of Anastasius Apocrisiarius written in 665/6, where he is said to reside at that time *in sancta Christi nostri civitate*, that is, in Jerusalem (Allen–Neil 1999: 173). Together with his brother Theodore Spudaeus, with whom he authored the *Hypomnesticum* (ed. Allen–Neil 1999: 196–227), he was instrumental in documenting the exiles of Maximus and other members of his circle. Both, it seems, were Palestinian monks (see Noret 2000 and Booth 2013: 302 n.111). They first appear in Rome during the pontificate of Martin, but Theodore then moved to Constantinople, where he witnessed Martin's trial and visited him in his prison in winter 653/4. Theodosius and Theodore also witnessed the trial of Maximus, Anastasius the Monk, and Anastasius Apocrisiarius in Constantinople in 662, visited a dyothelite exile in Crimea perhaps in 666/7, and finally visited Lazica again *c.*668/9. Theodosius' acquaintance with Maximus thus belongs to the latter part of Maximus' career. See references in Lilie et al. (1998–2002: nos. 7439 and 7816).

A Note on the Arrangement of the Texts

Readers should note that, rather than replicating the strict chronological arrangement of Sherwood, we have attempted to arrange our texts into loose groups within an overarching biographical framework, since certain texts (such as those which chronicle the development of Maximus' position on the wills, or those which relate to the affair of the prefect George) are best discussed together. For ease of reference we include a final table which sets out the approximate chronological placement of each text in the corpus, and which readers can consult to discover the position of a particular text. Individual entries contain the conventional title of the work in English, the editions (starting from the newest, but always including a reference to PG), the *CPG* number, the date proposed (p. 28) by Sherwood, and other secondary literature directly relevant for the dating, followed by our discussion.

The Date-List

1. Major Texts of the Earlier Period

1. Liber Asceticus

Ed. Van Deun 2000a; PG 90. 912–956. *CPG* 7692. Sherwood 1952: 26 nr 10 = 'By 626'.

Early (before *c.*633/4). A dialogue between a novice and an elder on the ascetic life, progressing to an extended tirade on the need for compunction in the face of moral decline, perhaps prompted by the Persian occupation of the East. Closely connected with the *Centuries on Love*, which it precedes (see below) and with which it often appears in the manuscripts; similarly written at the request of Father Elpidius. The consensus on an early date (Sherwood 1952; von Balthasar 1941: 155) has been disputed by Dalmais (e.g. 1952, 1953), who preferred a date during Maximus' exile (655–62). This is unlikely for several reasons: (1) the simple nature of the prose, in contrast to the wider corpus (see Van Deun 2000a: xvi); (2) its survival, which would make it one of only three texts indisputably authored by Maximus himself to have survived from this period of exile and imprisonment (cf. *Ep. ad Anast.* and *Responses to Theodosius of Gangra*, see section 75); (3) the apparent ease with which Maximus is able to dispatch it to a correspondent, without reference to his present predicament; (4) Dalmais' view that our text represents the pinnacle of Maximus' ascetic vision is improbable, given the failure to integrate that vision within a wider christological and sacramental context, as in other prominent works (see e.g. *Or.dom., Myst.*); (5) most importantly, the absence of christological polemic and the text's indifference to monothelitism, in contrast to the demonstrable output of Maximus' circle in this period (*RM, DB*, perhaps *DP*, etc.).

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2. Centuries on Love

Ed. Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963; PG 90. 960–1073. *CPG* 7693. Sherwood 1952: 26 nr 11 = 'By 626'.

Early (before *c.*633/4). Four hundred aphorisms on the spiritual life. It seems to have been produced in tandem with the *Book on the Ascetic Life*, as established in the declaration: 'I have sent to your holiness, Father Elpidius, in addition to the treatise on the ascetic life also the treatise on love, in lots of one hundred chapters in equal number to the four gospels' (Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 48; PG 90. 960A, corr. Van Deun 2000a: xviii).

3. Ambigua to John

Ed. PG 91. 1061–1417; improved text in Constas 2014 vol. 1: 62–451, vol. 2: 2–330; Jeauneau 1988 (Eriugena's Latin translation). *CPG* 7705.2. Sherwood 1952: 31–2 nr 26 = '628–30'. (p. 29) Cf. Larchet 1998a: 29–30 (628–34) and 41 (628–30). The Greek text is in preparation for CCSG.

Early (before *c.*633/4), perhaps *c.*628? The text deals with certain difficulties in Gregory of Nazianzus. The addressee is 'John archbishop of Cyzicus', on whom see the prosopographical section. The text probably precedes the monoenergist crisis, not least because, as Larchet had noted, 'certains passages … se prêtent à une interprétation monoénergiste' (1998a: 29–30), for example at *Ambigua* 3, where Maximus refers to 'the one and unique operation in all of God and those worthy of God' (PG 91. 1076C = Jeauneau 1988: 26), a phrase he later retracted (*Opusc.* 1, 33A–B). One prominent and oft-commented theme of the text is the refutation of Origenism (esp. *Amb.Io.* 7, 15, 42), a particular concern of Palestinian authors in the preceding century, and perhaps reflecting Maximus' Palestinian origins. Parallels between the anti-Origenism of our text and that of *Letters* 6–7 (Benevich 2009) suggest a date close to 628 (see section 13). For Maximus' refutation of Origenism see also e.g. Sherwood 1955b; Cooper 2005: 65–95.

4. Questions to Thalassius

Ed. Laga–Steel 1980/1990; PG 90. 244–785. *CPG* 7688. Sherwood 1952: 34–5 nr 36 = 'between 630 and 633–34'; Larchet 1998a: 49 = 630–34.

Early (before *c.*633/4), but after the *Ambigua to John*. A huge work of scriptural interpretation, which should be called *Answers to Thalassius*; its addressee can perhaps be associated with 'Thalassius the Libyan and African' who wrote his own *Centuries on Love*; see the prosopographical section. Post-dates the *Ambigua to John* since Maximus refers to *Amb.Io.* 67 (Laga–Steel 1980: 39.59–61); also, *Question* 48 develops thoughts first present in *Amb.Io.* 41 (Laga–Steel 1980: ix). The *terminus ante quem* is perhaps indicated in the absence of discussion on the operation. Note also that the position on the wills of Christ is noticeably under-developed: see the application to him of προαίρεσις at *Questions to Thalassius* 42 (Laga–Steel 1980: 7.285–9), later retracted in *Opusculum* 1 (29D–32A). For detailed discussion of the text, see Blowers (1991).

5. Questions and Doubts

Ed. Declerck 1982; PG 90. 785–856. *CPG* 7689. Sherwood 1952: 26 nr 13 = 'By 626'.

Early (before *c.*633/4). The text comprises a series of questions and responses on scriptural and theological difficulties. Sherwood's dating follows von Balthasar's classification of our text among the earlier works (1941: 149–56), based upon the absence of charged observations on the operations and wills (see e.g. *Question* 21, Declerck 1982: 19); but his *terminus ante quem* relies on the discredited narrative of Maximus' Constantinopolitan origins. *Question* 162 (Declerck 1982: 113), discussing the raising of a house's roof at Luke 5: 19, affirms that 'those who have seen these places for themselves say that the roofs of the houses are made of the lightest pumice stone', in a possible allusion to Maximus' own Palestinian experience.

6. Exposition on Psalm 59

Ed. Van Deun 1991; PG 90. 856–872. *CPG* 7690. Sherwood 1952: 26 nr 12 = 'By 626'.

(p. 30) Early. Sherwood's *terminus ante quem* is based on the obsolete narrative of Maximus' stay in Cyzicus. Van Deun agrees that the text is early, but suspends judgement until a precise linguistic study has been completed (1991: xx–xxi). The association of *Psalm* 59, in which the psalmist desires to be liberated from war, with the Avar

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siege of Constantinople in 626 (e.g. Cantarella 1931: 58) ignores the continuous warfare which had characterized the period from 603.

7. Exposition on the Lord's Prayer

Ed. Van Deun 1991; PG 90. 872–909. *CPG* 7691. Sherwood 1952: 31 nr 25 = '628–30'.

Early (before *c.*636). Sherwood's dating of the text to the African period is unwarranted (Van Deun 1991: xxi), but that the text predates the christological controversies is established in Maximus' understanding and language of the will. He predicts his later commitment to 'two natural wills' in Christ (see e.g. Berthold 2011), but still applies to Christ the concept of γνώμη (Van Deun 1991: 34. 135–9), in contrast to his later thought, and qualifies the will as 'single' or 'one' when discussing the union of man and God (Van Deun 1991: 33. 111–15, 37. 181–2), unthinkable after the publication of the *Ekthesis* in 636 (see Booth 2013: 265–6, and cf. *Myst.*; *Ep.* 2; *Opusc.* 14, 18). Sherwood notes intellectual affinities with other early works: the *Mystagogy*, the *Ambigua to John*, and the *Questions to Thalassius*.

8. Theological and Economical Chapters

Ed. PG 90. 1084–1173. *CPG* 7694. Sherwood 1952: 35 nr 37 = '630–34'.

Early (but after the *Ambigua to John*). Sherwood's dating appears to be based on von Balthasar's observation (1941: 155) of dependence upon the *Questions to Thalassius* and the *Ambigua to John*; the latter dependence is confirmed in Sherwood 1955b: 106–9.

9. Mystagogy

Ed. Boudignon 2011; Sotiropoulos 2001; PG 91. 657–717. *CPG* 7704. Sherwood 1952: 32 nr 27 = '628–30'; Boudignon 2002: 317 = 630s.

Early (after the first retreat to the West, before *c.*636). An ascetical commentary on the eucharistic liturgy, dedicated to 'lord Theocharistus', on whom see the prosopographical section. The text has few chronological pointers, but based on the absence of pregnant christological references most critics have dated the text to Maximus' first African retreat. An early date is also suggested in the perhaps unguarded reference to the union of Christians according to a 'single identity of γνώμη' (Boudignon 2011: 60. 957), which echoes similarly unguarded phrases in other early works (see e.g. *Or.dom.*;*Ep.* 2; *Opusc.* 14, 18).

10. Scholia on Pseudo-Dionysius

Cf. PG 4, 16–432, 528–576; Epifanovich 1917: 111–208 (*Add.* 37). *CPG* 7708. Not in Sherwood.

(p. 31) Date indeterminable. Maximus' *scholia* on Ps-Dionysius are mixed in with those of other authors (e.g. in PG 4) and are difficult to distinguish; see the comments of Suchla (1980). It is reasonable to assume that the *Scholia* were produced in the same period as the *Mystagogy*, the latter explicitly being conceived as a supplement to Ps-Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (Boudignon 2011: 6. 54–8). The lack of a full modern edition is an impediment to further precision.

11. Fifteen Chapters

Ed. PG 90. 1177–1392. *CPG* 7695. Sherwood 1952: 35–6 nr 37a = '630–34'.

Date indeterminable; but perhaps early. The 500 chapters, as edited in the PG, are a late compilation, perhaps composed in the early twelfth century by Nicetas of Heraclea (Van Deun 1995: 19–24), of various works of Maximus, mainly the *Questions to Thalassius*. Only chapters 1–15 (PG 90. 1177A–1185C) and 16–25 (PG 90. 1185C–1189A) have independent traditions.[4] Sherwood sees 'no criterion for date' and joins them 'for time, as do the manuscripts in contiguity', to the *Theological and Economical Chapters*.

12. Questions to Theopemptus Scholasticus

Ed. Roosen and Van Deun 2003; PG 90. 1393–1400; Gitlbauer 1878: 85–9. *CPG* 7696. Sherwood 1952: 37 nr 41 =

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'630–33?'

Date indeterminable; but perhaps early. Maximus answers three scriptural difficulties put to him by Theopemptus *scholasticus*, who is probably to be identified with the Theopemptus mentioned in 641 in *Letter* 18 as an agent of the African prefect George (Roosen and Van Deun 2003: 68), which might point towards the date of the text. But the probable connection of Theopemptus with the circle of Alexandrian lawyers (Boudignon 2004: 15) does not exclude an earlier date. There are few chronological indicators within the text. As with the *Questions to Thalassius*—in the tradition of which our text also belongs—the traditional title of our text is a misnomer for *Answers to Theopemptus*.

2. Minor Early Texts

13. Letter 6—To Jordanes (or John the Sophist, or Archbishop John?), on 'The Soul is Incorporeal'

Ed. PG 91. 424C–433A. *CPG* 7699.6. Sherwood 1952: 25 nr 5 = 'Before 624–25?'; Larchet 1998a: 41–2 = 628–30.

Probably *c.*628. The addressee is given by Combefis as 'the most holy and most blessed archbishop John', but most manuscripts name Jordanes, with the exception of the *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7, which has 'John the sophist' (f. 2^{r}: τοῦ αὐτοῦ πρὸς Ἰωάννην σοφιστήν, noticed by Epifanovich [1917: xiii]; Photius also knew a letter to such an addressee: *Bibl., codex* 192B, ed. Henry 1959–77: 157b12–13). In response to a request from the recipient, (p. 32) Maximus writes a treatise against those who claim that the resurrection body will be corporeal after the manner of the terrestrial body (with its composite humours). The topic—which recalls the clash of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Eutychius with Gregory the Great in the late sixth century—is close to that of *Letter* 7, also dedicated to the fate of the soul after death and almost certainly addressed to Jordanes, which suggests that the addressee is the same. This would place our letter *c.*628 (below). Sherwood (1952), Larchet (1998a), and Benevich (2009) draw attention to the close theological affinities with the *Ambigua to John*, which support this early date, as do references to the soul's 'natural operations' and 'operations according to nature' (432B) in a context which does not suggest that the terms are pregnant or controversial. The letter thus belongs to a period when the association of nature and operation is made, but before the outbreak of the monoenergist crisis in 633/4. Benevich (2009) claims that Maximus' opponents are extreme anti-Origenists, which might make us think of Palestine as a context. But those opponents' views recall the position of the Latin Fathers (including Gregory the Great), that the resurrection body would be composed of the same materials as the terrestrial (see e.g. Bynum 1995). Is Maximus refuting the opinion of Latin theologians whom he encountered in the West?

14. Letter 7—To Jordanes the Priest, that after Death the Soul Retains its Intellectual Activity and is Separated from None of its Natural Powers

Ed. PG 91. 433A–440B. *CPG* 7699.7. Sherwood 1952: 31 nr 24 = '628 (643?)'.

August 628. Clearly linked to *Letter* 6. Maximus' correspondent has questioned him about a widespread doctrine put about by some prominent monks 'there', that 'the soul has obtained the ability to think and to reason from the body and, so they say, it cannot do these things without the body' (PG 91. 437A), and furthermore that after the resurrection the humours will continue to animate the body (PG 91. 433C). Benevich (2009) again argues that these doctrines represent an extreme form of anti-Origenism which Maximus then tempers, and he associates the text with specific doctrines contained within the *Ambigua to John*. Although it is tempting to think of a Palestinian context for such discussions, the debate on the fate of the posthumous soul was widespread and does not provide a means for placing the recipient (Dal Santo 2012). *Pace* Combefis, who has a priest John as the addressee, the manuscripts name Jordanes (Sherwood 1952), who is known only as the potential recipient of *Letters* 6–8. Maximus received the letter 'on the second day of the current month of August of the present first indiction' and was informed 'that you, my masters, who are the cause of all good things for me, are in good health' (PG 91. 433A). The first indiction corresponds to 628 or 643; the former date is preferable for a number of reasons: (1) Maximus plays on the theme of presence and absence, and of perception of the recipient with the eyes of faith, familiar from e.g. *Letters* 2, 4, 5, 8, 13, 23, 24, and 27, none of which is sure to belong to Maximus' second retreat to the West, and some of which certainly belong to the first period; (2) Maximus dwells on the natural properties and natural operation of the soul (PG 91. 436C–D), in terms reminiscent of *Letter* 6, and with little indication of the imminent controversies surrounding such terms; (3) Maximus refers to the controversy as a sign of the coming (p. 33) of

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the Antichrist, a theme more frequent in his early writings;[5] (4) affinities with the *Ambigua to John*, identified by Sherwood 1952. Maximus' complaint that there is no one to defend the true faith διὰ τὴν ἐπικρατοῦσαν τοῦ καιροῦ πονηρίαν (PG 91. 440B9–10) also fits the date of 628, before the Persian war was over.

15. Letter 13—To Peter the Illustris, Short Exposé of the Dogmas of Severus

Ed. PG 91. 509B–533A. *CPG* 7699.13. Sherwood 1952: 39–40 nr 44 = '633–34'; Larchet 1998a: 52 n.1 = 'troisième trimestre 633'; Boudignon 2004: 16 = 633.

Between 629 and 633? A lengthy refutation of the Severan doctrine of one composite nature, occasioned by some recent converts who 'returned … as a dog to its vomit' (PG 91. 512B). Maximus thanks God for Peter's safe completion of a sea voyage (PG 91. 509C6); Peter has left the place where Maximus is residing, and sailed to somewhere where 'blessed father Sophronius' is also (PG 91. 533A). He complains of a lack of books (PG 91. 532D) and encourages Peter to resist the triple (why 'triple'?) wave of the heresy. The modern consensus on the dating is based upon the identification of our Peter Illustris with the Peter, general of Numidia, who according to the *Relatio motionis* was dispatched in 633 to Alexandria. It is then tempting to associate (as did Sherwood 1952; Larchet 1998a: 51) the miaphysite converts/apostates with the Alexandrian union of June 633 (Maximus seems to have ignored the union of 629 with the Syrian Jacobites), and to place both Peter and Sophronius in Alexandria, where Sophronius is known to have protested soon after the union's realization in June 633 (see e.g. *Opusc.* 12). But apart from prosopographical problems pointed out above, there are several impediments to placing our letter in this context: (1) A rather imprecise statement of the Logos' assumption of the human operations ('The Word of God, neither in respect of *logos* nor *tropos*, has the powers which correspond to the natural operations of the nature assumed by him' [i.e. the *human* nature] [PG 91. 532B7–10]), which seems unguarded, and must place our text before the outbreak of the monenergist crisis in 633; (2) Maximus' statement of agreement with 'those that currently govern the church' (PG 91. 532C5–7) cannot be reconciled with the conflict between Sophronius and Cyrus of Alexandria; (3) the return of the Severans to their former confession implies that some time has passed. Our letter must, however, pre-date the elevation of Sophronius, called 'abba', to the patriarchate of Jerusalem late in 634; (4) given Sophronius' and Maximus' resistance to the union, one must wonder if Maximus would have here inveighed against Severan dissent from it. These doubts encourage us to place *Letter* 13 before the union of Alexandria, but after the policy of reunification of the imperial church had started to be implemented in 628. We are not informed about the events in Alexandria between the evacuation of the Persians in 629 and the union of June 633, but we can presume that the union was preceded by earlier attempts and negotiations between the churches. We may therefore be dealing here with one of the earliest responses of Maximus to Heraclius' policy of (p. 34) ecclesiastical unions. As elsewhere he plays on the theme of presence and absence, a theme which appears in other letters which seem without doubt to belong to the first period of exile in North Africa; cf. *Letters* 2, 4, 5, 8, 23, 24, 27.

16. Opusculum 13—On the Two Natures of Christ

Ed. PG 91. 145A–149A; cf. the fragment in Epifanovich 1917: 61–2 (*Add.* 16), which might be a lost fragment of our text (thus *CPG*). *CPG* 7697.13 and 7707.16. Sherwood 1952: 27 nr 15 = 'Date uncertain. Perhaps Crete 626/7?' So also Larchet 1998b: 19.

Date indeterminable, but perhaps before 633/4. The text is a short, anti-miaphysite, anti-Nestorian doctrinal statement across ten chapters, in which the absence of references to the operations perhaps encourages preference for a date before 633/4. Maximus insists on the distinction of the two natures only 'by the eyes of the intellect' (148B–C), which is a standard neo-Chalcedonian expression, but does not seem to have been used by him after the union of Alexandria. The attempt in Sherwood, and thence Larchet, to link this text to the Cretan sojourn reported in *Opusculum* 3 (in which operations and wills are said to have been debated), and then to date this sojourn to 626/7, is pure speculation; cf. the discussion of *Opusculum* 3. We know little of the purpose and even less of the context.

17. Opusculum 14/Additamentum 21—Various Definitions

Ed. PG 91. 149B–153B; a longer version in Epifanovich 1917: 68–70 (*Add.* 21, see also Roosen 2001/1: 5). *CPG* 7697.14 and 7707.21. Sherwood 1952: 42–3 nr 50 = 'By 640'. So also Larchet 1998b: 33.

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Probably before 633/4. A short treatise defining central theological and christological terms. Towards the end (but not in all manuscripts) it includes a brief definition of δύναμις with reference to ἐνέργεια, and then θέλημα, distinguishing natural and gnomic wills (153A–B). But the fact that ἐνέργεια is not the lead term in the definition, and the rather vague definitions of the will and (in particular) the operation, encourage a date before 633/4. (For similar language cf. *Or.dom.*; *Ep.* 2; *Opusc.* 18; *Myst.*). An earlier date—at least before the *Ekthesis* (636)—is also encouraged in the definition of 'relational union' as that 'which brings different γνῶμαι together into one will' (152C), on which see also *Opusculum* 18. Epifanovich (1917: ix–x) points out parallels with other works of Maximus, mainly *Letter* 15 and, to a lesser degree, *Letter* 12.

18. Opusculum 18—Definitions of Unions

Ed.Van Deun 2000b, seeming to suggest a date after 633/4; PG 91. 213A–216A. *CPG* 7697.18. Sherwood 1952: 30 nr 22 = '626–33'; so also Larchet 1998b: 20.

Early, perhaps *c.*634/5. Maximus offers definitions of twelve different types of union. The third of these—'union in respect of relation, concerns the γνῶμαι [and results] in one will'—is paralleled in Sophronius' *Synodical Letter* (*Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*, Riedinger 1990–2: 438) written in 634/5. Maximus uses a similar language concerning 'one will' in *Letter* 2, the *Exposition on the Lord's Prayer*, and in particular (p. 35) *Opusculum* 14. All this suggests a date before the *Ekthesis*, and probably around the time of Sophronius' *Synodical Letter*.

19. Letter 23—To Stephen the Priest and Abbot

Ed. PG 91. 605D–608B. *CPG* 7699.23. Sherwood 1952: 33 nr 30 = '628/9?'; so also Larchet 1998a: 46.

*c.*632 or 642. A short note on the themes of separation and spiritual love. Some manuscripts give a fuller title than Combefis (*Vat. gr.* 504: κυρίῳ ἀββᾷ Στεφάνῳ πρεσβυτέρῳ; *Vat. gr.* 507, f. 113^{v}: κυρίῳ ἀββᾷ Στεφάνῳ πρεσβυτέρῳ; *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7: πρὸς Στέφανον πρεσβύτερον καὶ ἡγούμενον), thus undermining the attempt of Larchet (1998a: 47) to establish a chronological order for correspondence with Stephen on the basis of the absent title of hegoumen. Stephen was also the recipient of *Letters* 22, 40, and *B*, and from the first and last of these appears to have been a person of some standing. Maximus seems to address an entire community rather than an individual, since he refers to 'venerable Fathers' and 'disciples and teachers of love', and asks them not to forget him, 'your child and disciple' (608A), but it is unclear whether this indicates Maximus' former placement in that community, or constitutes a simple *confessio humilitatis*. The connection of the aforementioned 'Fathers' with Chrysopolis (Sherwood 1952; Larchet 1998a) is once again based upon the discredited Greek *Life*; we cannot know where Stephen and his community were. The theme of estrangement is reminiscent of *Letter* 8 to Sophronius (summer of 632) and of other letters composed during his first presence in North Africa (*Epp.* 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 24, and 27). We should note, however, that in *Letter B* Maximus contacted Stephen in connection with the affair of the prefect George (641–2), to which *Letter* 22 may also be related (see section 53). The similarity of tone in *Letters* 22 and 23 perhaps suggests the same connection also for the latter.

20. Letter 40—To the Same (sc. Stephen, Priest and Hegoumen)

Ed. PG 91. 633C–636A; partly re-edited by B. Markesinis in Janssens 2002: xxiv. *CPG* 7699.40. Sherwood 1952: 34 nr 34 = '630–34'. Larchet 1998a: 47 = 634.

*c.*634? Extant only in *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7, f. 2^{r} (τοῦ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν αὐτόν), where it is preceded by *Letter B* (τοῦ αὐτοῦ πρὸς Στέφανον θεοφιλέστατον πρεσβύτερον καὶ ἡγούμενον). The addressee is thus Stephen, the recipient of *Letters* 22, 23, and *B*, and not Thalassius as in the fragmentary edition of Combefis (PG 91. 633C).[6] The improved text by Markesinis shows Maximus hesitant to accept a command from Stephen, for which Abba Thomas would apparently be a more suitable executor. The command in question is thought to have been eventually passed by Thomas over to Maximus, who then wrote the *Ambigua to Thomas*, which implies a date *c.*634 (Janssens 2002: xxv).

(p. 36) 3. Maximus and the Officials

21. Letter 5—To Constantine, the Illustris and (former?) Sacellarius, on Ethics

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Ed. PG 91. 420C–424C. *CPG* 7699.5. Sherwood 1952: 24 nr 1 = 'date uncertain'.

Perhaps *c.*628. Full title in *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7, f. 17^{v} (τοῦ αὐτοῦ Κωνσταντίνῳ ἰλλουστρίῳ καὶ ἀπὸ σακελλαρίων); ἀπὸ σακελλαρίων is confirmed by Photius (*Bibl., codex* 192B, ed. Henry 1959–77: 157b21–22). *Vat. gr.* 504, f. 153^{v}, adds 'on ethics' (ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Κωνσταντῖνον σακελλάριον ἠθική). For Constantine, see the prosopographical section above. Praise of ascetic virtue and warning of judgement. Maximus addresses the recipient in similar terms as in *Letter* 4 to John Cubicularius ('my master', 420C; cf. 413A), but the theme of presence and absence (420C) is less strongly phrased. The appearance of that theme also encourages an earlier date (cf. *Letters* 2, 4, 8, 13, 23, 24, 27). The other letter to Constantine the *sacellarius* is *Letter* 24/43, dated to *c.*628; Larchet 1998a: 40 (if we read '628' for '638') suggests that the two letters are close to each other.

22. Letter 24 = Letter 43—To Constantine (the former?) Sacellarius or to John Cubicularius

Ed. PG 91. 608B–613A and 637B–641C. *CPG* 7699.24 and 43. Sherwood 1952: 32 nr 28 = '628–29'; Larchet 1998a: 40 = 638 (appears to be a misprint for '628').

Probably 628–9. Response to recipient's letter announcing universal peace to Maximus (608C=637C: εἰρήνης κοσμικῆς εὐαγγέλια τὸ γράμμα κομίσαν). Maximus does not share the triumphalist mood of his correspondent; he rather encourages him to make peace with God, and expresses the remarkable opinion that peace on earth and subsequent admiration for the emperor should not detract from the greater war against the passions (Booth 2013: 162–3). *Letters* 24 (to Constantine) and 43 (to John) are virtually identical, save for the addressee. Combefis (PG 91. 607–608 n.[i]) thought it unlikely that two identical letters should have been addressed to two different addressees. The absence of *Letter* 24 from the only manuscript that transmitted *Letter* 43 (*Laurent. Plut.* 57.7) supports this view. The letter was thus probably dispatched to Constantine the Sacellarius, as indicated by the majority of manuscripts, the recipient also of *Letter* 5. Maximus is far away from his correspondent (608C=637C), and that he needs to be informed of the peace suggests that he is at some remove from the East, perhaps in North Africa. The peace is in all likelihood that realized in Heraclius' accord with Kavadh Shiroe in April 628, or perhaps that agreed with the general Shahrbaraz in July 629, but it is not impossible to think of other periods of cessation of warfare, for instance the two treaties which Cyrus of Alexandria concluded with the Arabs in *c.*636 and in 641 (Hoyland 1997: 574–90).

23. Letter D—To John

Unpublished, extant in *Cantabrig. Colleg. S. Trinit.* O.3.48, s. XII, f. 64^{v}–65^{v}. *CPG* 7703. Not in Sherwood. See Canart 1964: 419–20.

(p. 37) Before *Letter* 2. Maximus congratulates his 'blessed master' John for his progression 'into the rank to which he has now been appointed' in the secular administration. We can perhaps presume, therefore, that 'John' is John Cubicularius, and that this is Maximus' earliest extant letter to him, upon his election to that rank; see the prosopographical section above for the implications. He then recommends to John the bearer of the letter, 'the most wise ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων and sophist lord Zacharias', who is otherwise unknown.

24. Letter 27—To John Cubicularius

Ed. PG 91. 617B–620C. *CPG* 7699.27. Sherwood 1952: 32–3 nr 29 = '628/9?'; so also Larchet 1998a: 37.

Date unclear, but perhaps *c.*630 (first African retreat). A letter of recommendation for the bearer (PG 91. 620A), who is unnamed. Maximus is at some distance from the recipient (PG 91. 620A4–6) and plays on the themes of physical separation and of spiritual love and presence (PG 91. 617B–620A). The tone and language are reminiscent of *Letters* 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 13, 23, 24, 28, and 30, most of which seem to belong to the first period in North Africa (so also Sherwood, who places it before *Letter* 24, thinking the separation here more fresh). Nevertheless, it is not impossible that it belongs to a later period of Maximus' correspondence with John, which lasted until 641/2.

25. Letter 2—To John Cubicularius, on Love

Ed. PG 91. 392D–408B. *CPG* 7699.2. Sherwood 1952: 25 nr 6 = pre-626, followed by Larchet 1998a: 35 with n.2; Winkelmann 2001: 56 nr 16.

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Before 640 and probably before or around 633. On the addressee and his association with Maximus, see the prosopographical section. Sherwood's dating is based on the discredited tradition of Maximus' Constantinopolitan origins. The letter is on the theme of love, and reads as a sophisticated introduction to the actual object of the letter, which is not preserved, not unlike Maximus' comments on God's love in *Letter* 44 to John, which serve to introduce the delicate subject matter of the letter. Maximus has at some stage been in John's presence, but is now absent at considerable distance (PG 91. 393A). The temptation is to place Maximus in North Africa, perhaps during his first retreat, as suggested by the theme of presence and absence which appears in other letters of the first period of exile (cf. *Epp.* 4, 5, 8, 13, 23, 24, 27), but other contexts can be imagined (such as his return to the East, cf. *Ep.* 3). The beginning refers to significant largesse sent by John (PG 91. 393A), suggesting proximity with *Letter* 3. Maximus distinguishes between the gnomic and natural wills of mankind (as in *Ep.* 1; cf. *Or.dom., Q.Thal.*) and ties this to Christ's renewal of human nature (e.g. PG 91. 404B–D), but subsequent references to the single γνώμη and κατὰ τὸ θέλημα βούλησίς τε καὶ κίνησις of man and the saints with God (PG 91. 396C, 401B), and the loose discussion of ἐνέργεια (PG 91. 401B–D), encourage us to situate the letter before Maximus' open opposition to monothelitism (640), and in all likelihood before or during the outbreak of the monoenergist crisis in 633. (For this loose language around 'will', cf. *Or.dom.*;*Opusc.* 14, 18; and *Myst.*)

(p. 38) **26. Letter 3—To the Same (sc. John Cubicularius)**

Ed. PG 91. 408C–412C. *CPG* 7699.3. Sherwood 1952: 25 nr 7 = pre-626; followed by Larchet 1998a: 38 with n.1.

Before 640, and probably before 636. Maximus thanks John for the reception of letters, along with a 'blessing' sent to 'the most pious monks of the holy monastery of the saint and glorious martyr George' (408C). Sherwood's biographical reasoning is similar to that for *Letter* 2. There is no indication within the letter that this monastery should be located in Cyzicus or elsewhere, or that Maximus himself was a member of it. The same monastery may be referred to in *Letter* 31 (625C), where it appears (in *c.*632) as an eastern community returning from a westward flight from barbarian invasion. It is clear that Maximus had a significant association with the community's monks, and it is tempting again to place our letter during Maximus' first North African retreat, with John dispatching largesse to expatriated eastern ascetics in the West; or after his return to the East, when he had perhaps reunited with the same monks (after *Ep.* 31). The theme of the letter is again the power of Christian love, and Maximus distinguishes the natural and gnomic wills in humankind (409B–C) as in other early works (cf. *Ep.* 2 above), but here without reference to Christ. We can perhaps presume this to exclude a date after the *Ekthesis* in 636, or at least after Maximus' public opposition to monothelitism from 640. For similar letters of thanks for material help for his community, see *Letters* 37–9.

27. Letter 4—To John Cubicularius, on Godly Sorrow

Ed. PG 91. 413A–420C. *CPG* 7699.4. Sherwood 1952: 25 nr 8 = pre-626.

Before 642, but it is impossible to be more precise. Maximus praises his correspondent's godly sorrow, warns of an impending judgement, and extols the virtue of humility. The tone suggests a long-standing personal acquaintance. Although the address in Combefis says πρὸς τὸν αὐτόν, the name of the addressee is spelled out in the manuscripts (e.g. *Vat. gr.* 507, f. 168: πρὸς Ἰωάννην κουβικουλλάριον). Sherwood's chronological reasoning again departs from the narrative established through the Greek hagiographic corpus. The concluding section (420B) repeats the theme of presence and absence of which Maximus is so fond elsewhere, and in texts which seem for the most part to belong to the first period of exile in North Africa (cf. *Letters* 2, 5, 8, 13, 23, 24, 27) but it is difficult to place the letter in a particular period. On intellectual grounds most scholars (e.g. Sherwood) consider it to belong to the same period as *Letters* 2 and 3—see also *Letter* 5 below—but in no manuscript known to us does *Letter* 4 follow upon them.

28. Letter 10—To John Cubicularius

Ed. PG 91. 449A–453A. *CPG* 7699.10. Sherwood 1952: 26 nr 9 = 'By 626 or 630–34'.

Before 642, but precise date is indeterminable. The text is a remarkable treatise on the legitimacy of political power. In response to the question, 'How is it that God has judged it right that men be ruled by other men?' (PG 91. 449A), Maximus asserts that terrestrial rule exists to counter the disorder introduced in the Fall, and that whichever ruler maintains the rule of law is God's pious lieutenant on earth; but he also suggests that the ruler (p. 39) who

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departs from the same principle will gather around him the wicked, and drag his domain to ruin. The ending—'may God allow us to be willingly ruled by him through the fulfilment of his life-giving commandments, and duly to respect those who rule on the earth according to him, as guardians of his divine ordinances' (PG 91. 453A)—sounds as a warning: the kings are legitimate only as long as they act as guardians of divine ordinances. This suggests a period in which the emperor's rule had come under criticism. One possible context is the Persian occupation of the East, or its dissolution in 628–29: ambivalence towards Heraclius is also conspicuous in Maximus' *Letter* 24 from that period, and Sherwood observes certain theological parallels with the *Questions to Thalassius* and other early texts. But the kind of criticism implicit here is conceivable at various points within the troubled reign of Heraclius and his successors, and the emphasis on 'divine ordinances' perhaps points towards the theological controversies of their reigns. The emperors appear in plural (PG 91. 453A8), and if this refers to the actual political situation, the letter would date before 642. Indeed, all the letters dispatched to John seem to precede this date.

29. Computus Ecclesiasticus

Ed. PG 19. 1217–1280. *CPG* 7706. Sherwood 1952: 45 nr 65a = October 640–Early 641. Cf. Lempire 2007.

October 640–February 641. A defence of the Alexandrian computus, with the beginning of the world fixed to 5492 BC, structured in three sections: (1) date of Yom Kippur, the beginning of Lent and Easter; (2) polemic against an alternative computational system of those 'who multiply by five and by six' (see Grumel 1958: 117–22); (3) eternal calendar for the determination of the day of the week and of the day of the lunar cycle, and chronological lists. Internal cross-references guarantee that this is a single coherent work. It is possible that Maximus reacts against the innovative treatise of the monk and priest George, composed in 638/9 and one of the first attestations of the Byzantine world era (but Lempire 2007 is prudent). The *Computus* is addressed 'to the all-praised *patricius* Lord Peter' (PG 19. 1217B), who is in all likelihood the 'patrician', that is, the general, of Africa; for the problems of identification see the prosopographical introduction. The date of the work is given as 14th indiction, thirty-first year of Heraclius, 357th year of Diocletian (PG 19. 1270D–1271A), which together indicate a date after the beginning of Heraclius' thirty-first year on 5 October 640, but before the news of his death on 11 January 641 reached North Africa, whither we can presume Maximus now to have returned. The text therefore constitutes our first dateable witness to his return to North Africa.

4. Returning from the West (c.632)

From around 632 date a group of inter-related letters in which Maximus, from North Africa, asks his recipients to receive back from exile either himself (*Ep.* 8) or other refugees (*Epp.* 28–31), and enquires whether the barbarian threat from which he and others (p. 40) had fled has in fact passed (*Epp.* 8, 28, and 30). The letters bear some striking similarities of language, theme, and content, but there is no sound reason to question the simple evidence of the manuscripts that they were sent to three different recipients rather than to one, archbishop John of Cyzicus (*pace* Sherwood 1952: 29; Larchet 1998a: 41–5), or two, Sophronius and John Moschus (unconvincingly identified with John of Cyzicus by Rozemond 1977, 1984). See the prosopographical section. *Letters* 28/30 and 29/31 form two pairs of letters that are not exact duplicates, although they raise the same themes. The different wording, lengths, and levels of detail suggest that the two addresses were of different clerical status, with 'Curisicius' (Κυρισίκιος) enjoying a higher status, perhaps that of archbishop, than John, apparently an ordinary bishop of the province of 'Curisicius'.

30. Letter 8—To the Priest Jordanes or (and?) to the Monk Sophronius Called Eucratas

Ed. PG 91. 440C–445B; there are two versions of the ending: long (ed. Devreesse 1937: 34–5) and short (ed. Devreesse 1937: 34 n.3; Epifanovich 1917: 84 [*Add.* 29, a more complete version]; extant also in *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7 [unrecognized by Van Deun 1991: xxxviii]). *CPG* 7699.8 and 7707.29. Sherwood 1952: 28–30 nr 19 = '632'; so also Larchet 1998a: 43.

Between June and August 632. The addressee is uncertain: the manuscripts name the priest Jordanes, the 'monk Sophronius called Eucratas', or the priest John. Sherwood preferred the least attested priest John, sometimes identified with 'John of Cyzicus' (Larchet 1998a: 43–5; Winkelmann 2001: 58–9). Most critics, however, prefer Sophronius, whose surname 'Eucratas' is attested also in the *Life of John the Almsgiver* 23, and confirmed in Photius (ed. Henry 1959–77: 157b11–12) (e.g. Epifanovich 1917: xiii; Devreesse 1937: 32–3). The arguments

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against the authenticity of our letter in Speck 1997: 441–67 do not convince; cf. Stoyanov 2011: 69 n.191 (with literature).

The letter seems to have been written a little after the separation of Maximus from his addressee. He expresses his longing to be reunited, playing once again on the theme of presence and absence (440D–441A), which appears in other letters, some of them certainly of this same period; cf. *Letters* 2, 4, 5, 7, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30. He compares himself to a sheep torn by 'the wolves of Arabia, that is to say, of the West' (444A: τῶν λύκων τῆς Ἀραβίας τουτέστι τῶν Δυσμῶν), an association possible only through the Hebrew or Syriac text of the Bible (cf. Hab. 1: 8, and Songs 3: 3). This may allude to the first Arab raids.[7] In the conclusion Maximus summons his correspondent to 'call me to yourself, and shelter me under your wings, if indeed there is no more fear of the actual barbarians, on account of whom I went through such expanses of the sea, as I loved life' (445A4–7), and asks with insistence for more information. In 632 these barbarians cannot be the Avars, as is sometimes suggested, but must be either the Persians or rather—given that the Persian threat had disappeared in 628–29—Arab tribes who had pillaged the (p. 41) Judaean deserts in 614 and of whose galvanization under the banner of Islam, Maximus might now have become aware (see also Boudignon 2004: 17–18). It is thus probable that Sophronius and/or Jordanes were back in the East, perhaps in Palestine (*pace* e.g. Follieri 1988: 32–3, placing Sophronius in Constantinople). The famous ending edited by Devreesse describes the forced baptism of Jews in Carthage in 632 (on which see Dagron and Déroche 1991: 28–32). Maximus relates an imperial order, brought by an unnamed eparch from Constantinople to the province of Africa, to baptize the Jews and Samaritans, which was carried out on the Pentecost of the current indiction 5—the letter was therefore written between 31 May and 31 August 632, no doubt in Carthage. Manuscripts preserve two versions of the ending, which differ significantly as to their assessment of the events in Carthage. The short ending, which seems to correspond in the manuscripts to Jordanes as the addressee, is more positive, while the longer and more pessimistic ending, possibly written slightly later, was apparently destined for Sophronius. The long ending expresses Maximus' consternation at the imperial manoeuvre, which he fears will pollute the church, and which announces the end of times (for the anti-Jewish polemic cf. *Ep.* 14). Maximus perhaps 'customized' his letter for two different recipients, not unlike in the case of two other pairs of similar letters which Maximus sent to two distinct addressees (*Epp.* 28–9, 30–1). This hypothesis can be supported with the unparalleled fact that some manuscripts have two copies of *Letter* 8, one addressed to Jordanes, and the other to Sophronius (e.g. *Vat gr.* 504 and 507).

31. Letter 28—To Bishop Curisicius

Ed. PG 91. 620C–621B. *CPG* 7699.28. Sherwood 1952: 27–8 nr 16 = 626–32 (so also Larchet 1998a: 42).

*c.*632. Due to similarities of theme, content and tone we can presume that *Letters* 28–31 were composed at the same time as *Letter* 8, dated to 632. On the addressee and its manuscript tradition, see the prosopographical section ('John of Cyzicus'). Maximus congratulates the recipient on his recent election to the 'high-priesthood', probably to be interpreted as consecration as archbishop. He alludes to a danger to the unity of the church (621A4–8, an allusion to the negotiations with the miaphysites or to the schism within the church of Jerusalem; for the latter see Jankowiak 2009: 112–21), and urges the recipient to fulfil his clerical vocation and gather back in his scattered sheep (622A), on the condition that the 'expectation of enemies' at which those sheep fled their homeland has passed (622A). These enemies must either be the Persians (but they had withdrawn from the East already in 629), or the Arab tribesmen who had raided the Judaean deserts in 614 (see *Letter* 8). If the latter is correct then Curisicius would appear to be in Palestine, but then it is unclear which archbishropic he could have occupied.

32. Letter 29—To the Same (sc. Curisicius)

Ed. PG 91. 621C–624A. *CPG* 7699.29. Sherwood 1952: 27–8 nr 18 = 626–32.

*c.*632. The letter is a clear sequel to *Letter* 28. Curisicius has now fulfilled the task which Maximus enjoined in *Letter* 28, since he is said to have gathered in the flock which had fled against its will from its homeland, but now returned across the vast expanse (p. 42) of sea (621C). We can presume that the letter was dispatched soon after its predecessor, before the expansion of the Muslims into the Near East (*c.*633) once again plunged the empire into crisis. Amongst the returned exiles Maximus places one 'sanctified Lord Abba George the Priest' (624A), on whom see *Letter* 31. Curisicius was thus overseeing the same monastic communities as John, who is

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perhaps the former's suffragan. The reference to the wolves (621D1) and the rare expression 'rod of teaching' (621C5–6, cf. 441D) suggest the close proximity of *Letter* 29 to *Letter* 8.

33. Letter 30—To Bishop John

Ed. PG 91. 624A–D. *CPG* 7699.30. Sherwood 1952: 27–8 nr 17 = 626–32 (so also Larchet 1998a: 42).

*c.*632. As in *Letter* 28, Maximus summons his correspondent to gather in his scattered sheep, 'if the foul expectation of enemies has completely passed, on account of which they endured so great a flight' (624C).

34. Letter 31—To the Same (sc. Bishop John)

Ed. PG 91. 624D–625D. *CPG* 7699.31. Sherwood 1952: 27–8 nr 20 = 632.

*c.*632. As with *Letter* 29, this is a clear sequel to its predecessor. Once again Maximus refers to the return of some members of the recipient's flock, and names two individuals: Eudocia ἡ ἐγκλειστή, who appears to be an abbess (625B); and 'our lord the sanctified George the priest', who must be identical with that George referred to in *Letter* 29. Maximus calls him 'the truly divine field [γεώργιον] and the most esteemed cultivator [γεωργόν] of the divine and great George' (625C), suggesting that he served a community dedicated to St. George, perhaps the same as that referred to in *Letter* 3. This same George is perhaps the recipient of Maximus' *Opusculum* 4 (with Booth 2013: 266–7). We do not know where the recipient was, but the common reference to George shows that he was overseeing the same communities as Curisicius, who was perhaps his superior. On the possible connection with Palestine, see *Letter* 28.

5. Against the Ecclesiastical Unions and Monoenergism (633–36)

35. Letter 19—To Pyrrhus, the Most Holy Priest and Hegoumen

Ed. PG 91. 589C–597B. *CPG* 7699.19. Sherwood 1952: 37–8 nr 42 = 'End 633, early 634'; Larchet 1998a: 26–30 = end of the year 633.

Late 633 or early 634. In the conclusion to the letter Maximus refers to the 'sea travel' of the letter's bearers, suggesting he is in North Africa. But as the recipient was in Constantinople, it is not impossible that he had returned to the East. Maximus begins with effusive praise for the recipient, and lauds a recent document which 'the new Moses', Sergius of Constantinople, has issued (592B–C). This Maximus calls *Psephos*, (p. 43) identified in later texts as that which banned the statement of Christ's 'one' or 'two' operations (see e.g. Sergius, *First Letter to Honorius,* Riedinger 1990–92: 542–4) issued after Sophronius' confrontation with Sergius of Constantinople in the second half of 633. Here Maximus seems to accept the document, and sets out a clear position on the communion of the operations and the singularity of the acting subject in the Incarnation (592D–593A). Nevertheless, and although he does not commit to a statement on the 'two operations', he demonstrates an evident suspicion of the 'one operation' formula, calling the Alexandrian accord an 'innovation in the faith' (592C), speaking of the 'natural operation' of the flesh (593A), and asking Pyrrhus to elucidate certain questions: what is ἐνέργεια, what are its kinds, what is ἐνέργημα, what is the difference between ἔργον and πρᾶξις, etc. (596B). He concludes, 'I have not yet been able to understand precisely why and how it is necessary to accept speaking and thinking of 'the one operation'' (596B7–9). From *Opusculum* 9—in which Maximus defended his position in this letter—we know that Maximus had also received 'a huge tome' from Pyrrhus, no doubt the same as was excerpted in the *Acts of the Lateran Council* (Riedinger 1984: 152), which refers to Sophronius in respectful terms and thus seems to belong to the earliest stages of the conflict (Jankowiak 2009: 182–3). Pyrrhus, we should note, had previously been a Palestinian monk (Pertusi 1958: 14–21), but at the time of writing was, according to Nicephorus, *archon* and hegoumen of the monasteries of Chrysopolis, and a friend to the patriarch Sergius (*Chronography,*de Boor 1880: 118; *Short History,* Mango 1990: 74). We thus have a remarkable situation in which the two disciples of the protagonists in the *Psephos* recognize the accord but nevertheless continue the discussion, defending the positions of their masters, Sergius and Sophronius.

36. Letter 15—To Cosmas, the Most God-Beloved Deacon in Alexandria, on the Common and Particular, that is, on the Essence and the Hypostasis

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Ed. PG 91. 543C–576D; additional fragments in Epifanovich 1917: 71–2 (*Add.* 23) and 85 (*Add.* 31, see also Roosen 2001/1: 7). *CPG* 7699.15, 7707.23 and 7707.31. Sherwood 1952: 40 nr 46 = 'After 634. (634–40)'; Larchet 1998a: 52 = 634–39.

*c.*633, before *Letter* 14. *Pace* Larchet (1998a: 54), there seems little reason to doubt that this letter is the 'concise written response on the dogmatic chapters' composed by Maximus in response to the wish of the Alexandrian deacon Cosmas, referred to in *Letter* 14 (537C), even if it is far from concise. If so, this dates it to *c.*633. A long doctrinal treatise on the difference between essence and hypostasis, with evident access to a considerable range of books (contrast with *Ep.* 13), the letter is a sophisticated but somewhat confused anti-Severan tract in which Maximus reacts to a polemical attack of the Severans against himself: 'I do not think one thing in my soul, as some of those who celebrate Severus claim, and speak differently to those I chance upon. Do not believe this. Rather I think, believe and speak as I was taught and as I received from the Fathers, and, to say it more precisely, I bring forth my thoughts embodied in words' (576A). It is unclear to what this charge of insincerity refers, but it demonstrates the engagement of Maximus in the debates accompanying the conclusion of the Union with the Theodosians in 633. (p. 44) It is notable also that our letter includes a statement on the operations of Christ which is not explicitly dyenergist or anti-monoenergist (*pace* Sherwood, who calls it 'strikingly antimonenergistic'): 'We speak of both the miracles and the sufferings as being of the same, that is Christ, since he is clearly one, who operates (ἐνεργῶν) the divine and the human. For [he operated] divine things bodily (σαρκικῶς), because he projected the power of miracles through the flesh, which is not without a share of the natural operation (φυσικὴ ἐνέργεια); and [he operated] human things divinely, because he freely and willingly accepted the experience of human sufferings, without natural compulsion' (573B). Although the reference to the natural operation of the flesh implies a preference for 'two operations', Maximus' position is similar to that of Sergius' *Psephos*, as well as Maximus' *Letters* 14 and 19, encouraging us to place them all in the short time after the publication of the *Psephos* late in 633 or 634, and before Maximus' explicit resistance to monoenergism. For Cosmas, cf. also *Letter* 16.

37. Letter 14—Dogmatic Letter to Peter the Illustris

Ed. PG 91. 533B–543C; the ending ed. Boudignon 2011: xxxi and xlii. *CPG* 7699.14. Sherwood 1952: 40–1 nr 47 = 634–40; Larchet 1998a: 52 = 634–39.

*c.*633. The name of the addressee, absent from Combefis' edition, is spelled out in *Vat. gr.* 504 as Peter Illustris (ἐπιστολὴ δογματικὴ πρὸς Πέτρον Ἰλλούστριον). On Peter, see the prosopographical section. Within the conclusion to the letter Maximus bemoans the Muslim conquests (540AB, 541B)—the invaders' description as a 'desert people' excludes the Persians—which he perceives as a manifestation of Christian collective sin, and indicative of the imminent reign of the Antichrist. He also states that the Jews support the invasion, and launches into a violent anti-Jewish invective. All this dates our letter to *c.*633, although the devastation seems to be recent. The description is vivid—might it be that Maximus has returned to the East and is close to events? The letter bearer is Cosmas the Deacon, apparently a recent convert from miaphysitism, whom Maximus wishes Peter to receive and, if necessary, to present to 'the venerable pope' (536A) so that Cosmas might resume his position as deacon. In the title to *Letter* 15 Cosmas is described as deacon at Alexandria, so the 'pope' can only be Cyrus (thus already Sherwood). Cyrus was not elected patriarch of Alexandria until after the *Pact of Union* in June 633—see Jankowiak (2009: 89–90)—and this again encourages us to place our letter after the *Pact of Union*, although it is not impossible that Maximus writes during the discussions which must have preceded it. Maximus presents dyophysite teaching as Cosmas' new creed, and asks the addressee to explain it to him in more detail (surprising if, indeed, Peter the *illustris* is also the general Peter). Was Cosmas converted to Chalcedon through Cyrus' reconciliation with the Egyptian Severans? Maximus states that the greatest good is the reuniting of those who were separated by faith (533B–C), and the letter appears to be a positive response to the same unionist initiative. This is supported in the rather loose christological statement, wherein Maximus describes the Logos as 'the same operating (ἐνεργῶν) the miracles, the same willingly (κατὰ θέλησιν) accepting the experience of human sufferings' (537A), emphasizing the Logos as the subject of Christ's actions but remaining silent on (p. 45) the relation of operation to nature. This statement is close to that of the *Psephos* of late 633 or 634. All the indications, therefore, suggest a date late in 633 or 634, although we cannot exclude a date in the first months of 633, when discussions with the miaphysites were ongoing and Cyrus had yet to endorse monoenergism. In the last lines—'un post-scriptum' edited by Boudignon—Maximus greets one more time Peter and 'the blessed child sir Nonnos', no doubt Peter's son.

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38. Ambigua to Thomas (On Various Difficulties in St Dionysius and St Gregory, to Thomas the Sanctified

Ed. Janssens 2002: 1–34; PG 91. 1032–1060. *CPG* 7705.1. Sherwood 1952: 39 nr 43 = '634 or shortly after' (following von Balthasar 1941: 150–2).

634 or 635. Thomas is the addressee also of the *Second Letter to Thomas* and is usually identified with the κύριος ἀββᾶς Thomas mentioned in *Letter* 40, where he receives a command from Abbot Stephen, thought to have been passed by Thomas to Maximus who responded with the *Ambigua to Thomas*. Thomas was a monk, but there is nothing to substantiate his, or Abbot Stephen's, connection with the Philippicus monastery near Constantinople (*pace* Janssens 2002: xxiii–xxiv). It is tempting to identify him also with ὁ μακάριος ἀββᾶς Thomas whom Pope Theodore sent, according to the *Relatio motionis*, to the patrician Gregory in Africa in 646/7; on whom see Brandes (1998: 185). As with the earlier *Ambigua to John* (with which it appears to have been combined by Maximus himself, see Janssens 2003), this short text deals with five difficulties, four in Gregory of Nazianzus and one in Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite. *Ambiguum* 4 comments on *Oration* 30 of Gregory of Nazianzus (30.6.5–20), but not on the passage that will become contentious at the beginning of the monothelite controversy (30.12). *Ambiguum* 5 deals with the phrase 'new theandric operation', and shows clear knowledge of the *Pact of Union* in June 633, in which this same phrase had figured in the form 'one theandric operation' (V.237–8, see *Acts of the Lateran Council,* Riedinger 1984: 512). Maximus' position here diverges from *Letters* 14, 15, and 19 in offering a repeated, explicit affirmation of the natural operations, stating that one cannot speak of one operation (V.249–50), but avoiding the expression 'two operations' (although he says at V.219–220: κλήσει τοῦ διττοῦ τὴν φύσιν Χριστοῦ τὴν διττὴν παραδηλοῦντος ἐνέργειαν). But he also diverges from Sophronius' *Synodical Letter* in insisting that *all* Christ's actions belong to a single subject and are both divine and human at the same time (e.g. V.192–212) rather than dividing them into human, divine, and theandric. Our text seems therefore to belong to the period after *Letters* 14, 15, and 19, and perhaps also after Sophronius' *Synodical Letter* (although this is difficult to establish, as pointed out by Bellini 1982: 42), but before an outright commitment to an explicit 'two operations' formula and before the focus on the question of the christological will(s). Some scholars wish to read quasi-monothelite sentiments into the text—e.g. V.93–4, speaking of the Word moving the humanity of its own initiative (αὐτουργικῶς) (Parente 1953)—and while most scholars reject such a reading (e.g. Larchet 1996: 312–14), it is evident that contemporaries also questioned it; see *Second Letter to Thomas* below. Nevertheless, the absence of discussion on the will(s) is striking.

(p. 46) ### 39. Second Letter to Thomas

Ed. Janssens 2002: 37–49. *CPG* 7700. Not included in Sherwood 1952. Larchet 1996: 17 = 'Spring 640', but see 289 n.55 = 'several months after the *Ambigua to Thomas*'. Janssens prefers the latter solution (2002: xxii–xxiii).

635 or 636. A follow-up to the *Ambigua to Thomas*, in which Maximus, having no doubt received a response from his correspondent, resumes his comments on the same passages of Gregory of Nazianzus and explains the aforementioned passage within the *Ambigua to Thomas* V.93–8 in which he referred to the Word moving the humanity of its own initiative, as the soul moves the body (*Second Letter* 3). Maximus' retractation shows an early stage of the reflection on the wills and his increasing disaffection with the compromise defined by the *Psephos*.

6. Letters to Marinus

40. Letter 20—To Marinus the Monk

Ed. PG 91. 597B–604B. *CPG* 7699.20. Sherwood 1952: 34 nr 33 = 'Early African stay (628–30)'; repeated in Larchet 1998a: 46.

636? On the addressee, see the prosopographical section. Here he is a monk, making this Maximus' earliest correspondence with him. Maximus acknowledges his many faults that will bring upon him eternal damnation and makes a vow of silence, promising to withdraw from theology, lest he suffers a bigger and more just punishment: 'I resolved to take silence as my associate, and to refrain totally from using divine words that, as it seems to me, are much above me, so that I am not condemned to a bigger degree and more justly, as the one who brings forth the words of God corrupted with my idleness in good deeds, which for this reason are unable to provide the life in grace to those who listen' (597B10–C3). Although he had earned some praise, he will keep silence to avoid leading

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others astray by the bad example of his life. But he breaks his vow at the encouragement of 'my most holy hegoumen, rich in wisdom' (597D1–5), who forced him to write to Marinus in order to make known his virtues (this hegoumen, we should note, cannot be Sophronius since he never held such a rank). Maximus writes on fear of God, insisting that it need be authentic and not simulated, and inveighs against 'Sadducees', 'scribes', and 'Pharisees', who show divine knowledge in words only, not in deeds, and who preach a theology of the demons. Maximus concludes by comforting Marinus and encouraging him to bear current events with patience (604A). The tone of the letter is polemical, the sting of which seems directed against the institutional church. Maximus is disenchanted and takes a vow of silence, apparently after some of his theological declarations have been condemned; he has accepted this condemnation and promised to cease from writing. What is the context? Given that Marinus appears elsewhere as the representative of Arcadius, archbishop of Cyprus (see esp. *Opusculum* 20), it is tempting to connect the letter with the conflict between Arcadius and Sophronius and the Council of Cyprus in *c.*636. The source which describes that council, the Syriac *Life* (8–15), states (p. 47) that Maximus' doctrine (of dyenergism) was there condemned—although he himself did not attend—and that in its aftermath Maximus withdrew from the doctrinal scene. In this case, *Letter* 20 appears as the auto-critique of Maximus after his condemnation, in which he nevertheless makes obvious to his correspondent his opinions on those who have silenced him.

41. Opusculum 7—Dogmatic Tome Sent to Cyprus, to the Deacon Marinus

Ed. PG 91. 69B–89B. *CPG* 7697.7. Sherwood 1952: 51 nr 73 = *c.*642; so also Larchet 1999b: 50.

*c.*640–41? On the correspondent see the prosopographical section. He is now a deacon but not yet a priest. A long anti-monothelite, anti-monoenergist 'dogmatic tome', composed with explicit knowledge of the *Ekthesis* (77A), but for the most part concerned with the question of the operations, as in the *Letter A* to Thalassius. It seems to date from after *Opusculum* 6 but before *Opusculum* 20, since Maximus develops his interpretation of Gethsemane from the former (80C–81A), but his citation of patristic authorities is less developed than in the latter, where Marinus is a priest. Maximus thanks Marinus for his zeal and chastises the 'treason' (προδοσία: 72C3, 73A7, and 12) of those who deprive Christ of his human nature. He refers to the 'new *ekthesis*' and appears to comment ironically on the recent appearance of the issue of the will (77A). Maximus' refutation of monothelitism focusses on Gregory Nazianzen's interpretation of Matthew 26: 39 (80C–84B) and the use in Ps-Dionysius of 'theandric operation' (emphasizing that the Areopagite did not use a number) and in Cyril of 'one συγγενής operation' (84D–88A; the passage comes from *Comm. in Ioh.* iv.2, ed. Pusey 1872/1: 530.18–19: μίαν τε καὶ συγγενῆ δι' ἀμφοῖν ἐπιδείκνυσι τὴν ἐνέργειαν). The interpretation of this last passage brings Maximus to speak of two operations that are, however, 'completely united by their mutual affinity (συμφυΐα) and interpenetration (περιχώρησις), so that he [Christ] makes them known as one operation through the union of the Logos itself and of his all holy body, which is not physical or hypostatical … but cognate (συγγενῆ) to the members through which he made himself manifest' (88A2–8). Maximus then argues that monadic expressions within the Fathers, though not supporting monoenergism, should be embraced for their opposition to division in Christ, acknowledging the contradictions contained within the tradition (88B–89D), but also coming close to advocating the 'one and two' approach later adopted at Constantinople, which Maximus ended up refusing (see Bathrellos 2004: 195–201). Maximus' defence of a dyenergist reading of the citation from Cyril is somewhat desperate, and his discomfort perhaps explains why, except for the roughly contemporary *Opusculum* 8 and, later, the defensive *Opusculum* 9, dyothelite authors only adduce it when referring to the position of their opponents, as in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (344A–B), in the *Doctrina Patrum* (ed. Diekamp 1981: 131–2, in the chapter listing 'the teachings of the Fathers put forward by the opponents'), and in *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council* (Riedinger 1990–2: 372 and 510–12). The failure of the dyothelite attempts to interpret this passage is emphasized in the *Dispute at Bizya* (*DB*, Allen–Neil 1999: 101, 299–301), where Maximus contests its authenticity and (p. 48) even attributes it to Timothy Aelurus. For the theological content of our *Opusculum* in more depth, see Larchet 1998b: 50–8.

42. Opusculum 20—Dogmatic Tome to the Priest Marinus

Ed. PG 91. 228B–245D. *CPG* 7697.20. Sherwood 1952: 41–2 nr 49 = 'by 640'; Larchet 1998b: 27 = 'environ 640'.

641, but after *Opusculum* 7. On the addressee, see the prosopographical section. *Pace* Sherwood and Larchet, our text must post-date *Opusculum* 7: the latter is addressed to Marinus as *deacon*, whereas here he is a *priest*; and in *Opusculum* 7 Maximus shows no awareness of the problematic passages of Anastasius of Antioch dealt with here

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(see also Léthel 1979: 74–7; Bathrellos 2004: 198 n.114). Marinus asked Maximus to comment on three texts which the monoenergists and monothelites were citing in support of their position: (1) *Against Diaitetes* (sc. John Philoponus) of Anastasius of Antioch, where he attempts to apologize for monoenergist phrasing therein (229B–233B) in a manner reminiscent of *Opusculum* 7 (for this defence, see Uthemann 1997: 400–4, and for the possible problems to which it gave rise, cf. *Opusc.* 9); (2) a passage of Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oration* 30 (233B–237C), treated also in less detail in *Opusculum* 4 (so also Larchet 1998b: 30–1); (3) the first *Letter* of Honorius to Sergius (237C–245A). The defence of Pope Honorius' monothelite formula is tortuous: Maximus first argues that Honorius' 'one will' referred to the divine will and did not preclude the human (237C–244B), but then implies that Honorius has never spoken of 'one' will: on a recent trip to Rome his disciple Anastasius cornered the entourage of Honorius into projecting the responsibility of the formula onto the Greek translator of the letter (244CD). For more details see Booth (2013: 267–8) and Jankowiak (2013a). In the conclusion Maximus requests that Marinus 'make known these things to him who presides as hierarch (ἱεραρχικῶς) over our blameless and orthodox faith'. This must be Marinus' bishop, whom we can presume to be Arcadius archbishop of Cyprus, who acted as an arbiter in the early stages of the controversy over the operation(s) and will(s) of Christ,[8] rather than his successor Sergius who by May 643 committed himself to the dyothelite cause (*Acts of the Lateran Council,* Riedinger 1984: 60–4). Maximus' entire correspondence with Marinus can be read as part of a wider diplomatic effort to win over the archbishops of Cyprus to the dyothelite position (Jankowiak 2009: 198–9). As Arcadius died a little before the death of Cyrus of Alexandria on 21 March 642 (John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 120, ed. Zotenberg 1883: 64–7), our *Opusculum* was probably written in 641, a date supported by (1) the fact that the defence of Honorius' letter to Sergius is paralleled in early dyothelite writings only in the letter sent by Pope John IV to the sons of Heraclius in spring 641 (ed. Schacht 1936: 235–46; fragments in PL 129. 561C–566D), possibly in response to an encyclical letter of the patriarch of Constantinople Pyrrhus (Marinus' demand for Maximus' comments is perhaps also in reaction to the encyclical letter of Pyrrhus: see Jankowiak 2009: 183–91 and 2013a); (2) the fact-finding mission of Anastasius to Rome makes sense only (p. 49) at a very early stage of the controversy over Honorius' monothelite formula, and very soon after Maximus' arrival in Africa. The theological content of the letter is discussed in some detail in Larchet 1998b: 27–33.

43. Opusculum 10—To Lord Marinus Priest in Cyprus

Ed. PG 91. 133A–137C; fragment translated in Latin by Anastasius the Librarian, PL 129. 577A–578B. *CPG* 7697.10. Sherwood 1952: 53–5 nr 79 = '645–46'; so too Larchet 1998b: 76.

*c.*643–46, perhaps June–July 643. Now extant in excerpts. On the addressee, see the prosopographical section. Marinus is now a priest, placing our text after *Letter* 20 and *Opusculum* 7. From Carthage (PG 91. 137B), and thus before his departure for Rome in 645/6, Maximus defends 'the present pope' in the face of theological detractors from Constantinople, who have contested the pope's doctrine of the *Filioque* and of the freedom of Christ from original sin, both contained in his synodical letter (PG 91. 133D–136A). Given the later importance of the *Filioque* in East–West relations, some have doubted the authenticity of these excerpts; but see Siecienski (2007) and Booth (2013: 270 n.177). The final excerpt from our text is a critique of the concept of hypostatical operation that Maximus found in Theodore of Pharan (136C–137B), from which we ascertain that he is in fact identical with the author of the famous *Preparation*, Theodore of Raithou; see Elert (1951: 71–6). Maximus' 'gallant but embarrassed' (Chadwick 1991: 632) defence of the pope and a warm word he has for Theodore of Pharan (136C12–13), later elevated to the rank of the founder of the monothelite heresy, suggest an earlier date than that proposed by Sherwood. Who is 'the present pope'? The text post-dates the *Ekthesis* (136D), and with Sherwood and Larchet we concur that the pope is Theodore, consecrated on 24 November 642. His synodical letter, sent to Constantinople probably in early 643 (Jankowiak 2009: 208–15), survives in fragments but these do not refer to the *Filioque* or to Christ's sinlessness (PL 129. 577C–582B). Sergius archbishop of Cyprus reacted to it in a letter sent to Pope Theodore already on 29 May 643 (*Acts of the Lateran Synod*, Riedinger 1984: 60–4). The request for clarifications on the part of Marinus, a member of Sergius' church who was concerned about Pope Theodore's unconventional theology, belongs to the same time as the letter of Sergius elicited by Theodore's synodical letter. We may thus assume that both letters were carried by the same envoys who stopped at Carthage on their way to Rome; this would also explain their reported haste (PG 91. 137B–C). In this case Maximus' letter would date from June–July 643. For detailed discussion of the theological content, see Larchet 1998b: 76–86.

44. Opusculum 1—To Marinus the Most Holy Priest and Oikonomos of the Most Holy Metropolis of

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Constantia of the Island of Cyprus

Ed. PG 91. 9A–37A. *CPG* 7697.1. Sherwood 1952: 53–5, nr 80 = '645–46'; so also Larchet 1998b: 86.

Probably *c.*643–46. The fullest title is given by *Ferrarensis* 144, f. 100^{v}: πρὸς Μαρῖνον τὸν ὁσιώτατον πρεσβύτερον καὶ οἰκονόμον τῆς ἁγιωτάτης μητροπόλεως Κωνσταντίας τῆς Κυπρίων νῆσου (Martini 1896: 344). For the addressee, see the prosopographical section. Both Sherwood and Larchet suggest that *Opuscula* 1–3, along with *Opusculum* 10, (p. 50) are excerpts from a single text sent to Marinus, but the reference to Maximus' hasty answer makes it unlikely (137B). *Opusculum* 1 is a developed anti-monothelite text, placing it post-*c.*643; cf. *Opusculum* 16. Maximus praises Marinus for the discernment that allows him to recognize 'what some proposed in an inexact way on the matter of the wills' (12A). The text then seeks to differentiate numerous Greek terms concerning the will (12C–21C); it refutes the monothelite opinion of a single will of the saints with each other and with God after the resurrection (21D–28A), an opinion which Maximus himself once expressed (cf. *Ep.* 2 above), and of the single will in Christ (28B–33A). In the final section Maximus defends his earlier use, in *Ambiguum to John* 3, of the phrase 'one and single operation of God and the saints' (33A–37A). He also offers an explicit retreat from his earlier application of προαίρεσις to Christ in *Questions to Thalassius* 42 (29D–31A). It is evident that some of Maximus' inconsistencies have been pointed out, and that Marinus needs the arguments set out here in some ongoing discussions (see Larchet 1998b: 86–92).

45. Opusculum 19—To Marinus the Priest, Solution to the Difficulties Put Forward by Theodore, Deacon and Rhetor

Ed. PG 91. 216B–228A. *CPG* 7697.19. Sherwood 1952: 51–2 nr 75 = '642 or after'; so also Larchet 1998b: 68.

Post-*c.*643, and perhaps 645. On the addressee, see the prosopographical section. Marinus is here a priest, placing the text after *Opusculum* 7. Maximus responds to two *aporiae* 'of Theodore of Byzantium, deacon, rhetor and *synodicarius* of the Constantinopolitan archbishop Paul' (216B), but it is unclear why the *Opusculum* is addressed to Marinus. The rare title συνοδικάριος is used in connection with envoys circulating between the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople (*Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*, Riedinger 1990–92: 856.12 and 894.19), suggesting that Theodore posed his questions on a mission to Rome. Two embassies of Patriarch Paul to Rome are known, occasioned by his synodical letter in 642, but its bearers do not include a deacon Theodore (PL 129. 577C1–2), and by his dogmatic letter of May 645 (*Acts of the Lateran Council,* Riedinger 1984: 205), the bearer of which might have been the deacon Theodore. The text indeed points to a developed stage of the crisis, when dyothelitism had been recognized and contemplated in Constantinople, and some significant theological problems raised. The first of Theodore's difficulties equates the attribution to Christ of a natural human will and of a (heretical) natural human ignorance, suggesting that both should be attributed to Christ through appropriation (216B–C); the second states that if all departure from the Fathers is innovation, one must either demonstrate their statement of 'natural wills', or else recognize that one is supporting one's own innovative teaching with the name of the Fathers (216C–217A). In response to the first *aporia*, Maximus distinguishes natural and relational appropriation in Christ—as in *Opusculum* 20 (237A–B)—but then proves somewhat inconsistent in his placement of ignorance amongst Christ's natural human passions, before stating that it could not have existed (220B–221C). In response to Theodore's second *aporia*, Maximus cites unidentified patristic passages in support of the natural will, and states that this is the position of numerous Fathers (PG 91. 224B–D). He then accuses the monothelites of being the true innovators, recapitulating his critique (p. 51) of the different monoenergist/monothelite positions (PG 91. 224D–228A). There is a detailed discussion of the theological content in Larchet 1998b: 68–73.

7. Back to Africa: The Affair of the Nuns (*c.*640–*c.*642)

The affair of the nuns of Alexandria is described in circumstantial detail in *Letter* 12 to John Cubicularius, which summarizes events so far, and which we can situate with precision due to the stated date therein of the arrival of an order from the Patrikia, no doubt Martina, to George the prefect (ἔπαρχος) of Africa in November indiction 15, that is, 641. Numerous other letters relate to the same affair, but their chronology presents significant problems. In all such letters Maximus is, however, in North Africa, meaning that the date is after *c.*636–38 when, according to the Syriac *Life*, the Muslim conquest of Syria forced him westward once more. This *terminus post quem* is also supported in the very presence of the Alexandrian nuns in North Africa, improbable before *c.*636 at the earliest, when some raiding into Egypt began (Hoyland 1997: 574–90) and the Alexandrians might have feared imminent

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invasion (cf. the presence of refugees from Libya in *Letter* 12). More probable, however, is their flight westward *c.*640, when the conquest proper had begun in earnest.

The sequence of events and the chronology of Maximus' letters can be reconstructed as follows:

- Nuns from two miaphysite monasteries, of Sakerdos and of Amma Ioannia, fled from Alexandria to the province of Africa at some point in the period *c.*636–*c.*640, more probably towards the end of that chronological range.
- Both communities entered into communion with the Chalcedonian church after their arrival to Africa; the good news was communicated by the prefect George to the emperors and the patriarchs (*Ep.* 18, 588C). To reward the nuns for their conversion, the eparch presented them with an expensive building (*Ep.* 12, 464B6–7; also referred to in *Ep.* 18, 589B3–4).
- The two monasteries then broke communion with the Chalcedonians.
- The prefect George warned them through the pen of Maximus of the consequences of breaking communion, and exhorted them to return to the Chalcedonian fold, or else return to him the 'gifts' he had granted them—this is *Letter* 18. At the same time he announced an imminent audience with the emperors and patriarchs in Constantinople, to whom he had written about their case (589A).
- George, together with the archbishop of Carthage and the local leaders, reported the matter to the emperor (in singular) and to the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople by means of letters (δι' ἀναφορᾶς) (*Ep.* 12, 464C–D). George's trip to Constantinople is not explicitly mentioned, but he received letter(s?) from the emperor (singular) and from the patriarchs, ordering him to remove all the heretics from the province; as for the nuns, those who remained in communion with (p. 52) the imperial church could conserve their monasteries, while the unrepentant ones were to be divided among orthodox monasteries and their goods confiscated for the public treasury (*Ep.* 12, 464D–465A).
- George executed the order and persuaded 'all the heretics from Syria, Egypt, Alexandria, and Libya' to join the church. The nuns from the monastery of Sakerdos were first divided among orthodox monasteries, but eventually returned to the Chalcedonian church; those supervized by Amma Ioannia converted quickly enough to keep their monastery (*Ep.* 12, 465A–B). *Letter* 11 probably belongs in this context.
- In November 641 George received the order of the Patrikia Martina to liberate the imprisoned nuns (*Ep.* 12, 460A–B).
- George refused to execute the no-doubt authentic (*pace* Sherwood 1952: 48) imperial order; Maximus then tried to explain his insubordination in *Letter* 12 to his contact at court, John the Cubicularius.

This much of the narrative is clear. The question is where we should place within it *Letters* 1, 16, 44–5, and the so-called *Letter B*, all of which relate to an absence of the prefect George in Constantinople: in *Letter* 1 Maximus wishes him well upon his departure for the capital; in *Letter* 16 he refers to the calumnies piled upon George; in *Letters* 44–5 he writes to John Cubicularius in praise of George's virtues (the first delivered through the μεγαλοπρεπέστατος Theocharistus); and in *Letter B* he asks one Stephen to check that a copy of *Letter* 44 is identical with the original. (*Epp*. 22–3, to Stephen, may also be related to this request.)

There are two possible solutions, but each has its problems. The first is to suppose that the impending imperial audience which George announces in *Letter* 18 was in fact a summons, but that he survived this interview to return to the province so as to be there again in November 641 (so that *Letter* 12 is the final letter in the corpus). This solution is favoured by Booth (2013: 255–6), noting others who place the letters before *Letter* 12. Since Maximus in *Letter* 12 reports George's letter to the Pope, this perhaps encourages us to place the whole affair in the second half of 640 or 641, given that the Roman see was vacant from October 638 to May 640. In this case George's fate would mirror that of the patriarch-cum-administrator Cyrus of Alexandria, deposed late in the reign of Heraclius (Nicephorus, *Short History* 26) but restored soon after by Heraclius Constantine or Heraclonas (John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 116, 119).

The second solution, which Sherwood 1952: 49–51 favoured, is to suppose that George's refusal of the κέλευσις from Martina prompted her to dismiss him, arrest him, and summon him to the capital, so that the letters relating to his absence date instead from after *Letter* 12. This reading is supported by the mention in *Letter* 45 of two previous letters to John (*sc. Epp.* 12 and 44), the title of 'ex-prefect' attributed to George for *Letter* 1 in the *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7, Maximus' attempt to bolster George's spirits in *Letter* 1, and the increasingly nervous tone of *Letters* 44–5.

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There is, however, a chronological difficulty (seen by Sherwood 1952: 50). The consistent reference throughout the contested group to 'emperors' rather than 'emperor' (*Ep.* 44, 645C2–4, 648C6–9; *Ep.* 45, 649B7–8) implies a date before news of the fall of Martina and her sons Heraclonas and David-Tiberius, and of the subsequent sole reign of Constans II, reached Africa (unless, that is, we consider the general Valentine to have been, or to have been perceived to be, Constans' co-emperor; see John of Nikiu, (p. 53) *Chronicle* 120; Theodore Spudaeus, *Narrationes* 17). After Treadgold (1990), it has been supposed that Martina fell in November 641—that is, simultaneously with George's receipt of the κέλευσις—which would leave no time for a subsequent series of letters to the capital referring to the 'emperors'. But in fact the date of November 641 rests upon an ingenious but far from unassailable reattribution of the notice on Constans II in *Chronicon Altinate* to Heraclonas (see Jankowiak 2013b: 308, arguing for the original arrangement). It is true that the narrative of Nicephorus' *Short History*, which breaks off at the consecration of Paul as the patriarch of Constantinople on 1 October 641, leaves the reader with the impression of the imminent fall of Martina. But the *Chronicle* of John of Nikiu describes a protracted power struggle *after* these events, and perhaps even after the death of Cyrus of Alexandria on 21 March 642, which is reported and placed immediately before that description (ed. Zotenberg 1883: 215, 458, but note that in the same source at 219, 462–3, the text again reports Cyrus' death, but instead places it after the culmination of events in Constantinople); the precise date of Martina's fall is, therefore, far from clear. In this case, we must then imagine a tight but not impossible schedule over the winter of 641/2 and early 642:

- The composition (in or soon after November 641) of *Letter* 12, and its receipt in Constantinople.
- The execution of the order to arrest George and his deportation to the capital. Maximus consoles him with *Letter* 1, and tries to muster support for him in Constantinople with *Letters* 44 and B.
- Subsequent, and much cooler letters, to John and perhaps Abbot Stephen (*Epp.* 45 and 22), after waiting for and failing to receive a response.
- The affair, and Maximus' part in it, must have been widely known, as suggested by the consolation letter sent by the Alexandrian deacon Cosmas (*Ep.* 16).
- The arrival of the news of Martina's fall and the accession of Constans as sole emperor, possibly delayed by the troubled circumstances of these same months in Egypt hampering communications with the West.

The affair of the prefect George may have been more than an episode in Maximus' career. Even if it is unclear why the vicissitudes of a group of Alexandrian nuns engaged the emperors and the patriarchs and led to the fall of the eparch of Africa, the affair appears to have played a key role in the estrangement of Maximus from the Constantinopolitan court. The absence of any reference to the operations and the wills is remarkable—although there is also no allusion to the ongoing Muslim conquest of Egypt—and perhaps suggests that Maximus radicalized his doctrinal position after he had lost influence in the entourage of the emperors.

46. Letter 18—In the Name (ἐκ προσώπου) of George, the Most Famous Prefect of Africa, to the Nuns Who Defected from the Catholic Church in Alexandria

Ed. PG 91. 584D–589B. *CPG* 7699.18. Sherwood 1952: 48–9 nr 67 = 'Dec. 641, Jan. 642', repeated at Larchet 1998a: 57.

640/1. *Pace* Sherwood, it is evident that *Letter* 18 precedes *Letter* 12, where the further development of the affair is described. Maximus appears as the official theological (p. 54) porte-parole of George. 'George' rebukes the addressees for their re-conversion to miaphysitism (588C), and expounds dyophysite doctrine. He reminds the nuns that he had written to everyone—patriarchs, bishops, governors, and even the emperors themselves—to make known their conversion, not suspecting that they would return to heresy so quickly. He orders them to 'give the gifts from me to you to my man Theopemptus', who carries the relevant written authorization (probably to be identified with the addressee of *Q.Theop.*), and threatens that he will inform the emperors and the patriarchs of their apostasy when he goes to visit them (589A5–11). The nuns, it appears, are the same refugees referred to in the later *Letters* 12, rather than residents of Alexandria itself (so also Sherwood 1952; *pace* Boudignon 2004: 15).

47. Letter 11—To the Hegoumene [I(o)annia?], on a Nun Who Left the Monastery and Who Repented

Ed. PG 91. 453A–457D. *CPG* 7699.11. Sherwood 1952: 43 nr 59 = 'African stay'; so also Larchet 1998a: 56, suggesting with more precision 641–42.

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640/1. After Combefis, Sherwood (1952) and thence Larchet (1998a: 55) suggest that the addressee is the 'Iania' who appears amidst a list of Maximus' correspondents in Photius (*Bibl.* codex 192B, ed. Henry 1959–77: 157b13: πρὸς Ἰανίαν ἡγουμένην). A nun has quit her community and then repented, and Maximus asks her abbess to receive her back, even though she is reluctant. Larchet suggests a connection with the Alexandrian nuns of *Letter* 18, in which case Photius' 'Iania' could be identified with the 'Ioannia' referred to as abbess of some of those same nuns in *Letter* 12 (460B, 465B). If the addressee is indeed Ioannia, then the contents suggest a date after their forced reconciliation with the eparch (as described in *Ep.* 12). A mention of the divine 'wills and sufferings' (457B10–11: θελήματα καὶ παθήματα), in plural, does not seem to have theological implications.

48. Letter 12—To John Cubicularius, on the Correct Dogmas of the Church of God and against Severus the Heretic

Ed. PG 91. 460A–509B. *CPG* 7699.12. Sherwood 1952: 45–8 nr 66 = 'Nov–Dec 641'.

November 641 or soon after. An unsolicited letter to John—with whom relations have now soured—to inform him that in November of the present fifteenth indiction [641] Theodore the καγκελλάριος brought a letter from the Patrikia, that is Martina, to the eparch here (in Africa), ordering him to set free the Severan nuns of the Monastery of Amma Ioannia of Alexandria, and of the Monastery of Sakerdos. Maximus is surprised that John did not inform him of this matter, which caused much grumbling and 'diminished a little the reverence of the catholic church of God for our lady the all-praiseworthy Patrikia' (460C), and would have caused the revolt of Africa if the eparch had not declared the letter to be false. He reports that upon the reception of the letter some heretics from Alexandria and Syria, among them their bishop Thomas who belonged to the entourage of the empress, claimed that Martina followed their doctrine, and George punished them with imprisonment or a whipping. Maximus claims that he and other orthodox monks, in particular the Eukratades (on whom see Booth 2013: 149), opposed (p. 55) these calumnies against Martina and her late husband Heraclius, and the eparch himself defended as he could the reputation of the Patrikia (461A–B). Maximus proclaims himself perplexed and doubts the authenticity of the letter, which was, however, confirmed under oath by the καγκελλάριος. But he will be honest: if indeed John has suggested that Martina write a letter about the heretical women, this would be a serious charge against him. Maximus hopes that she sent it under the influence of others, forgetting that she should not meddle in church affairs, in particular as she is a woman (461B–464A). Maximus now offers a potted account of the nuns' experience in North Africa (see the introduction to this section). He then warns his correspondent against fraternizing with heretics (465C–D), before launching into a long refutation of miaphysitism (without explicit reference to operations or wills) (465D–509B). The letter testifies to the ecumenical approach of the imperial court as late as 641, and even after the death of Heraclius (for whom Maximus apologizes, as later in *Opusc.* 12, 142D–143A; cf. *RM* 41. 366–80). This fresh conciliation was perhaps connected with the consecration of a new patriarch of Constantinople, Paul, datable to 1 October 641. George opposed this policy by falsely declaring Martina's letter to be inauthentic, as acknowledged by Maximus. The 'autobiographical' passage cited since Combefis to support the claim for Maximus' Constantinopolitan origins and role at Heraclius' court (505B7–10) is nothing of the sort: it refers to the addressee, John.

49. Letter 1—To the Servant of God Lord George, the Most Famous Prefect of Africa

Ed. PG 91. 364A–392B. *CPG* 7699.1. Sherwood 1952: 49 nr 69 = 'After *ep*. 18, therefore early 642'.

*c.*640–42, perhaps early 642. Some manuscripts give a fuller title: 'to the prefect George, when he had sailed to Constantinople' (PG 91. 361–362 and *Vat. gr.* 1502: πρὸς Γεώργιον ἔπαρχον πλεύσαντα ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει). *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7 calls him 'former prefect' and correctly describes the letter: 'exhortation in the form of a letter to the servant of God lord George, former prefect of Africa' (λόγος παραινετικὸς ἐν εἴδει ἐπιστολῆς πρὸς τὸν δούλον τοῦ θεοῦ κύριον Γεώργιον γενόμενον ἔπαρχον Ἀφρικῆς). Written soon after George had been dismissed and summoned to Constantinople to which he is en route (392A–B). This is also the context for *Letters* 44–45 and *B*; on the possible dates, see the introduction. Maximus pours praise upon the recipient, who has been removed from his presence (364A). An allusion to the 'threats of men' (365B) suggests that George has fallen under some suspicion, and there is even an allusion to bodily suffering (373D). In the conclusion Maximus exhorts the recipient to take courage and wishes, with all the ascetics 'who live, because of you, in this province', for his safe return. Maximus refers to the distinction between gnomic and natural will in humankind (e.g. 368C), but there is no explicit link between such thoughts and dyothelite Christology, which is a striking omission.

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50. Letter 44—To John Cubicularius, Letter of Commendation (περὶ θετικῆς)

Ed. PG 91. 641D–648C. *CPG* 7699.44. Sherwood 1952: 49–50 nr 70 = 'Winter 642', i.e. 641/2.

(p. 56) *c.*640–42, perhaps early 642, possibly sent to Constantinople together with or soon after *Letter* 1. The meaning of περὶ θετικῆς in the title is not certain (PG 91. 641–642 note [n]; Sophocles 1914: 581). Maximus writes to John in order to praise the prefect George, who has been recalled to Constantinople. He recommends 'the most magnificent *illustris* lord Theocharistus' (τὸν μεγαλοπρεπέστατον ἰλλούστριον κύριον Θεοχάριστον) who carries the letter, and asks him to assist Theocharistus in the affair that Maximus entrusted to him. Maximus calls Theocharistus a good man who helped him and others a lot during his stay [in Africa], and asks John to use all his power to protect him from injustice (645A). See also the prosopographical section. Maximus asks that God 'preserve our most pious and all holy emperors [in plural, as also at 648C6–9], and empower the authority of their pious kingdom', but also that he forgive them 'for allowing the all-praised prefect of this province … to be recalled, even if for a moment' (645C). He then details George's manifold virtues, and informs John that, if he can see to the prefect's safe return, he will give to the emperors 'a safe and unbreakable bulwark, for no-one is a more trusted servant of their pious empire' (648C). This suggests that George's recall had occurred under some suspicion of dissent; cf. *Letter* 45. On the date, see the introduction to this section.

51. Letter B—To Stephen the Most God-Loving Priest and Hegoumen

Ed. Epifanovich 1917: 84–5 (*Add.* 30); not in PG. *CPG* 7707.30. Sherwood 1952: 50 nr 71 = 'as *ep.* 44, winter 642'.

*c.*640–42, perhaps early 642, possibly sent to Constantinople together with or soon after *Letter* 1; simultaneous with *Letter* 44. Preserved only in *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7, f. 1^{v}–2^{r}, where it follows *Letter* 8 and precedes *Letter* 40. Epifanovich (1917: xiii) associated it for this reason with *Letter* 40, also addressed to Stephen, and thought that the text given to Theocharistus mentioned in the letter was the *Mystagogy*. The text precludes such an interpretation, however. After a laudatory introduction, Maximus states: 'I summon you, my blessed master and also teacher, since you are in Constantinople, concerning the copy given to lord Theocharistus and what was sent to lord John Cubicularius, to compare it carefully, lest some mistake introduced through hasty writing alters the entire purpose of the subject.' The letter to John Cubicularius, the copy of which was given to Theocharistus, is no doubt *Letter* 44. Theocharistus is probably the addressee of the *Mystagogy* (see the prosopographical section), while Stephen appears to be the recipient of *Letters* 22, 23, and 40. The haste of the composition of the *Letter* 44 suggests that Theocharistus, certainly the bearer of the letter, may have boarded the same ship to Constantinople as the summoned prefect George, in whose defence Maximus tried to muster his rare contacts in Constantinople.

52. Letter 45—To the Same (sc. John Cubicularius)

Ed. PG 91. 648D–649C. *CPG* 7699.45. Sherwood 1952: 50 nr 72 = 'Early 642'.

*c.*640–42, perhaps 642, after *Letter* 44. The letter was written some time after *Letter* 44, to which we can presume John had not responded. The tone is cooler, but Maximus again writes in defence of 'George the Christ-loving prefect', and recommends him in (p. 57) the strongest terms. Here, however, he adds to his catalogue of virtues the fact that he was 'a lover of the church, and more honourable than all, a most ardent zealot of pious doctrine in accordance with the orthodox faith'. Maximus claims to have to set these out to persuade the 'all holy emperors' (again in the plural) 'not to listen to the unjust tongues of lawless men, who use cunning as if it were a sharpened razor, and love evil over goodness' (648D–649B). It is evident, therefore, that George's recall had occurred under some suspicion—political, doctrinal, or both. For these accusations, see also the allusion in the opening of *Letter* 16 (below). For the dating, see the introduction to this section. Note also that Maximus recommends the anonymous young bearer of the letter (649C8–9).

53. Letter 22—To Auxentius or to the Priest and Abbot Stephen

Ed. PG 91. 605B–C. *CPG* 7699.22. Sherwood 1952: 25 nr 2 = 'indeterminable' (so also Larchet 1998a: 41).

640–42, perhaps 642, sent after *Letter B* and together with *Letter* 45? The recipient is uncertain: Auxentius in Combefis, Abbot Stephen in some manuscripts (e.g. *Vat. gr.* 507, f. 113^{v}: κυρίῳ ἀββᾷ Στεφάνῳ πρεσβυτέρῳ). Maximus rebukes the recipient for not maintaining their correspondence: he cannot respect a friend merely because of his importance in the world (605C). Maximus has perhaps not received a response to an important

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letter, and one thinks of *Letter B* above. The high position of the recipient—who is perhaps identical with the recipient of *Letters* 23 and 40—supports this suggestion. The relation between our letter and *Letter B* would then be not dissimilar to that between *Letters* 44 and 45. In this case the date would be *c.*640–42; see the introduction to this section.

54. Letter 16—To the Same (sc. Cosmas the Deacon)

Ed. PG 91. 576D–580B. *CPG* 7699.16. Sherwood 1952: 49 nr 68 = 'Early 642'.

Probably *c.*640–42, perhaps 642. Maximus thanks the deacon Cosmas for the consolation he offered upon learning of the affair of the prefect George, who has fallen under some accusation (576D–577A). The name of George suggests a connection with the affair of the prefect of Africa, in which case the letter would date to the period of *Letters* 44–5, *B*, and perhaps 22. Maximus praises the steadfastness in faith, despite persecution, of Cosmas, whom we can presume to be the same addressee as in *Letters* 14–15, where, however, he was a recent convert. This places our letter at some distance from the earlier correspondence. If we assume that Cosmas remained in Alexandria, it is remarkable that the affair was known there, and moreover that Cosmas felt compelled to send a letter of consolation to Maximus. This suggests that Maximus was associated with George's disobedience and once again confirms our impression that Maximus and the prefect George were perceived as close allies.

55. Letter 17—To Julian, Scholasticus of Alexandria, on the Ecclesiastical Dogma of the Incarnation of the Lord

Ed. PG 91. 580C–584D. *CPG* 7699.17. Sherwood 1952: 36 nr 38 = 'By 633' (repeated in Larchet 1998a: 58).

(p. 58) After *c.*627, and perhaps *c.*640–41. An exposé of the theology of two natures in Christ after the Incarnation against those who claim the opposite (included here because of an apparent reference to the prefect George). Maximus congratulates Julian and another scholastic, Christopemptus, for their steadfastness in persevering in the correct faith—cf. *Letter* 16 above—suggesting their conversion from miaphysitism. He then offers a brief refutation of that doctrine. Sherwood's contention that the correspondents are refugees in North Africa is not cogent; see the counter-arguments in Larchet 1998a: 55, who places them in Alexandria (so also Boudignon 2004: 15). At the end of the letter Maximus reports that he has passed on the pair's letters to 'the all-blessed eparch', who we can perhaps assume to be George, prefect of Africa, who has undertaken to fulfil their command, reassuring them that the answer will be positive. We should therefore place Maximus in Africa. George's eparchate appears to have lasted from *c.*627 to *c.*642 (see Booth 2013: 110 n.95, 258), hence the date-range offered here. Since Maximus is evidently on good terms with George, and seems to act as his representative, it is tempting to place our letter during Maximus' second retreat, when comparable relations appear in, for example, *Letters* 12 and 18. The fact that Maximus here focusses on miaphysitism and not monoenergism or monothelitism does not necessitate a date before the *Pact of Union* in 633 (*pace* Sherwood and Larchet).

8. From Monoenergism to Monothelitism (*c.*636–*c.*642)

56. Letters 32–39—to Abbot Polychronius

Ed. PG 91. 625D–633B. *CPG* 7699.32–39. Sherwood 1952: 43 nos 51–8 = 'Uncertain date'; so also Larchet 1998a: 50–1.

*c.*636–40? These letters appear in the manuscripts in two groups: *Letters* 32–5 (e.g. *Vat. gr.* 504, 507; *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7; *Batopediou* 475) and *Letters* 36–9 (e.g. *Batopediou* 475, where they do not follow immediately on *Letters* 32–5). Nothing is known of the recipient. There seems to be a crescendo of misfortunes in *Letters* 32–5, in which Maximus' position seems desperate; the second group of letters, 36–9, has a more elated tone and thanks Polychronius for various food provisions. Assuming that the sequence of the letters is original, they were written at a time both of oppression, perhaps by some ἀλλόφυλοι (629A), and of the ensuing exile of Maximus. The Persian invasion is improbable, given that Maximus probably followed Sophronius into exile before the Persians occupied Egypt. The Syriac *Life* claims that Maximus left the East after the Arab invasion of Syria had begun (17), which is therefore a tempting context for this group of letters. It is difficult to see where Polychronius could have resided: he seems to be a victim of the misfortunes to which *Letters* 32–5 allude, but, at the same time, able to succour Maximus after his departure. *Letter* 32 was written a little before Easter; it insists on παρρησία as the sign of

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spiritual renewal—this suggests a period of time when Maximus was in conflict with the imperial church (628A). This impression (p. 59) is confirmed by the frequent mention of afflictions in *Letter* 33, where Maximus also speaks of a combat against men and demons, and asks God for patience (ὑπομονή). In *Letter* 34 Maximus encourages Polychronius to 'bear the hostile time with impassibility', even if there is no hope for improvement. 'Let us master anger and desire, and we will overturn the house of the foreigners (ἀλλοφύλων) with those who are in it' (629A). Is this an allusion to the Muslim conquerors? *Letter* 35 again insists on the exceptional tribulations of the time. All this tempts us again to think of the period after the Council of Cyprus in *c.*636, when the Muslim conquest was ongoing and Maximus' position in his eastern bolthole insecure. *Letters* 36–9 would then be the earliest documents of Maximus' second retreat to the West.

57. Opusculum 4—To George the Most Holy Priest and Hegoumen, who Asked by Letter about the Mystery of Christ

Ed. PG 91. 56D–61D. *CPG* 7697.4. Sherwood 1952: 41 nr 48 = 634–40; Larchet 1998b: 25–27 nr 8 = 640 ('première position de Maxime contre le monothélisme').

*c.*636–40, and probably *c.*640. The recipient is perhaps that 'George the Priest' referred to in *Letters* 29 and 31; otherwise he might be the hegoumen George who was archimandrite of St Theodosius in Palestine in this same period (in which case Maximus was no longer there); see Booth 2013: 267 n.164. After an exposition on the ascetic life (56D–57C) Maximus writes, perhaps for the first time but somewhat *en passant*, on the specific subject of the christological will(s). Maximus contests the interpretation by 'some [people]' of key passages of Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oration* 30, which played a significant role in the early stage of the debate (61A–C). The calm tone, and the lack of emphasis on the wills—the exposition of which Larchet 1998b calls 'assez confus'—suggest an earlier stage of the crisis, that is, *c.*640, or perhaps before. Nevertheless, although Maximus' position is here, in comparison to, for example, *Opusculum* 1, somewhat undeveloped (and does not commit to an outright statement of 'two wills'), his exposition on the natural human will in Christ (60A–C) seems more like a challenge to the *Ekthesis* (636) than a complement to *Psephos*' disavowal of two opposed wills (*pace* Sherwood). Comparison between Maximus' treatment of the same contested passage from Gregory here and in *Opusculum* 20 (233B–237C) also suggests that our text predates the latter.

58. Letter A—To Thalassius

Ed. PL 129. 583D–586B. *CPG* 7702. Sherwood 1952: 43 nr 60 = 640.

640. Our text survives in a Latin excerpt in the *Collectanea* of Anastasius Bibliothecarius under the title 'Commemoration of what the Roman envoys did in Constantinople'. On the recipient, see the prosopographical section. Maximus reports the account he has heard of the mission of a new pope's *apocrisiarii* to the capital, which coincided with a 'great and lengthy commotion' which appears to be linked to the legates' arrival. In the course of their long stay, an attempt was made to make them subscribe to a doctrinal *charta* (585A). They refused, stating that that was outside their prerogatives, and promised instead to show it to the pope, which (p. 60) the Constantinopolitans then accepted. Maximus reports, however, that he has been sent a copy of said *charta*, which bans discussion on the operations (586B). The pope is not named, but the circumstances described seem to match those of Severinus, whose election took more than eighteen months from the death of Honorius in December 638, suggestive of the withholding of imperial approval for some time. Our text appears to date from a period soon after approval was granted, and thus to the period of Severinus' accession in May 640 (*LP* 74). Thus, the *charta* is the *Ekthesis*. We note that, here, the principal sin which Maximus associates with the *Ekthesis* is that of banning discussion on the operations, although we cannot discount the possibility that our fragment then developed into a refutation of monothelitism. It nevertheless seems to be Maximus' first direct statement against the *Ekthesis*.

59. Opusculum 6—On 'Father, if it be Possible, Let This Cup Pass from Me'

Ed. PG 91. 65A–68D. *CPG* 7697.6. Sherwood 1952: 44–5 nr 64 = '640–42'; Larchet 1998b: 43–9 = 641 (citing Léthel 1979: 86).

*c.*640–41? Addressed to an anonymous monothelite. The title refers to Matthew 26: 39, which continues 'Not as I will, but as you will'. It became an important point of contention in the monothelite crisis, and occurs also in *Opuscula* 3, 7, 16, 23, 24, and especially 15. Often it appears in connection with the famous passage of Gregory

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Nazianzen's *Oration* 30, the monothelite interpretation of which Maximus here refutes (65B). He indicates 'two operations' and 'two wills' without hesitation (68A), which seems to separate it from *Opusculum* 4. It appears, however, to pre-date *Opusculum* 7 where the same arguments are more developed. For the theological content, see Larchet 1998b: 43–9.

60. Opusculum 8—Copy of the Letter Sent to the Most Holy Bishop Lord Nicander by Maximus of Holy Memory, on the Two Operations in Christ

Ed. PG 91. 89C–112B. *CPG* 7697.8. Sherwood 1952: 43–4 nr 61 = '*c.*640'; so also Larchet 1998b: 33.

*c.*640–41? Nothing is known of the recipient outside the title. Maximus refers to the 'oppression' (θλῖψις) now afflicting the world, the like of which it has never seen nor will see again, and the 'invasion of enemies' (92C–D). This, no doubt, intends the Muslim conquests. Is Maximus, therefore, still in the East at this point? Nicander, whom Maximus addresses with great respect, has requested the tract (112A), which appears as a polemical weapon against (Chalcedonian) monoenergist opponents rather than miaphysites. It constitutes an extended refutation of the 'one operation', although there are references throughout to the natural wills (e.g. 96AB, 100A), and a penultimate paragraph to the effect that 'the same can also be said about the will' (109C–112A). It must date to the same period as *Opusculum* 7, when the argument on the operations was dominant but nevertheless moving on to that on the wills, and an explicit connection being (p. 61) made between the two doctrines. As there, Maximus here focusses on Ps-Dionysius' use of 'theandric operation' and Cyril's use of 'one συγγενής operation' (100B–109B), struggling again with the latter, but still defending the patristic use of monadic phrases as a guard against division in Christ (105A). For the theological content, see Larchet 1998b: 33–40.

61. On the Operations and the Wills, to the Priest Thalassius.

Fragments extant in *Opuscula* 2–3, PG 91. 40A–56D and in *Opusculum* 26b/ *Additamentum* 24, ed. Roosen 2001/3: 784–6. *CPG* 7697.2–3. Sherwood 1952: 53–5, nos 81–2 = '645–46'; so also Larchet 1998b: 86.

After *c.*640 and before June–July 643. Apparently a major treatise of Maximus, three fragments of which are currently known: a passage from chapter 8 'that there is absolutely no opposition of the will nor two willing subjects in the one God-Word incarnate, but rather an essential difference, as for the natures thus also for the natural wills, if he has obtained divine will as God, and a human [will] as a man' (*Add.* 24, Roosen 2001/3: 785–6); chapter 50 on the Severan assimilation of the nature to the hypostasis (*Opusc.* 2); and chapter 51 'that the Fathers who speak of two wills in Christ indicate the natural laws, not the γνῶμαι' (*Opusc.* 3, also quoted in *Opusc.* 26b/ *Add.* 24). *Opusculum* 2 appears in Combefis' edition under the heading 'to the same Marinus', suggesting a connection with the preceding *Opusculum* 1, but this reading is not certain (see *CPG* Suppl. 7697.2–3). *Pace* Sherwood (1952: 54), several chapters edited by Epifanovich 1917: 62–3 as *Additamentum* 17 do not belong to this treatise (see Epifanovich 1917: viii nr 17). The dedicatee of the treatise, priest Thalassius—on whom see the prosopographical section—can be identified thanks to the title of one of the extracts quoted in *Additamentum* 24 (Roosen 2001/3: 785; Epifanovich 1917: 75). chapter 50 (*Opusc.* 2) argues against the christological errors of Severus and Nestorius, and the consequences of those errors for their views of operation(s) and will(s). In chapter 51 (*Opusc.* 3) Maximus expounds dyothelite doctrine with particular attention to Gethsemane (48B–49A), before turning to a long refutation of Severan monothelitism (49B–56D). Therein he refers to a debate on the operations and wills which he had with some 'pseudo-bishops' on Crete (49C), who claimed that the *Tome* of Leo implies two operations, two wills, and two persons; instead, they professed 'one will and every divine and human operation proceeding from one and the same God the Word incarnate, in accordance with Severus' (49C–52A). This, however, might well be a simple monoenergist profession of one operating Christ rather than a Severan statement. The stay of Maximus on Crete cannot be precisely dated—the oft-quoted date of 626/7 (e.g. Larchet 1998a: 11 n.3) is based on the obsolete chronology of Maximus' life. Maximus develops the distinction between natural and gnomic will(s), but does not clearly exclude the latter from Christ, unlike in *Opusculum* 16 (192B–193B). For detailed discussion of the theological content of this text, see Larchet 1998b: 93–7. It must post-date Maximus' public opposition to monothelitism *c.*640, but is likely to be earlier than *Opusculum* 1—whether or not it was appended to it—the developed perspective of which it seems to lack. Later works might have superseded it.

(p. 62) 9. Mature Anti-Monothelite Texts (*c.*643 Onwards)

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62. Opusculum 25—Ten Chapters on the Two Wills of the Lord our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Written to the Orthodox

Ed. Van Deun 2008; PG 91. 269D–273D. *CPG* 7697.25. Sherwood 1952: 44 nr 63 = *c.*640, followed by Larchet 1998b: 43 and Van Deun 2008: 195–7.

After *c.*643. The text consists of ten chapters defending the logic of a 'two wills' formula and critiquing monothelitism. It concludes with some brief observations on the often deceptive and misleading nature of words, and the need to understand them from a shared basis (273B–D). The audience, whom Maximus calls 'blessed ones', seems allied to him, as the title in most manuscripts also suggests. Sherwood places it alongside *Opusculum* 24, which, however, seems to belong to a more developed stage of the crisis.

63. Additamentum 18—Thirteen Chapters on Wills

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 681–2 (Text VIII); Epifanovich 1917: 64–5. *CPG* 7707.18. Not in Sherwood.

After *c.*643. A series of developed *aporiae* against the 'one will' formula, close to *Opusculum* 25 and *Additamentum* 19. Roosen regards the attribution to Maximus, on which the manuscripts are unanimous, as correct (2001/3: 673–8); for parallels between the text and Maximus' wider anti-monothelite corpus, see Roosen 2001/4: 925–6. Like *Opusculum* 25 and *Additamentum* 19, it seems to belong to a developed stage of the crisis.

64. Additamentum 19—Ten Chapters on Wills and Operations

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 689–91 (Text IX); Epifanovich 1917: 66–7. *CPG* 7707.19. Not in Sherwood.

After *c.*643. Close to *Opusculum* 25 and *Additamentum* 18. Ten *aporiae* against monoenergism and monothelitism, focussing on the integrity of the divine and human natures. The attribution is unanimous in the manuscripts, and Roosen (2001/3: 684–5 and 2001/4: 930) identifies various parallels in Maximus' anti-monothelite output, especially the phrase κατ' ἄμφω τὰς αὐτοῦ φύσεις ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ εἷς Χριστός, θελητικὸς καὶ ἐνεργητικὸς τῆς ἡμῶν τυγχάνει σωτηρίας, which also occurs in *Acts of the Lateran Council* (Riedinger 1984: 374). Although Maximus twice refers to his opponents' position as 'new', this is a rhetorical device, and the text seems to belong to an advanced stage of his refutation.

65. Opusculum 16—On the Two Wills of the One Christ our God, to Theodore the Deacon

Ed. PG 91. 184C–212A. *CPG* 7697.16. Sherwood 1952: 51 nr 74 = 'After 643?'; Larchet 1998b: 58 = 'un peu après 643'.

After 641. The addressee is identified in the excerpt from this work contained in *Opusculum* 26b/*Additamentum* 24 as Theodore the deacon (Roosen 2001/3: 777). He is addressed by Maximus, who claims to be his servant and disciple (185C), as πάτερ (p. 63) ἡγιασμένε (184D), which excludes the monothelite deacon Theodore, the addressee of *Opusculum* 19. This is Maximus' longest treatise on the two wills and operations. His complex differentiation of the various cognates of 'will' (185C–188D), which mirrors the position of *Opuscula* 1 (above), and of the natural and gnomic will (192B–193B) suggested to him by an unidentified monk, as well as his long defence of the two natural wills (190A–197C)—including an extended treatment of Gethsemane and Matthew 26: 39 (196C–197A)—and operations (197C–208C) in Christ points to an advanced stage of the crisis, and predicts much contained within the *Disputation with Pyrrhus*. The date will therefore be after 641, but the *terminus ante quem* cannot be determined. Sherwood notes Maximus' failure to use the terms 'ἐνεργητικός' and 'θελητικός', although used in *Opuscula* 6, 7, 19, and 27, but it appears doubtful that our text precedes all of these, and we are reminded of the pitfalls of dating through theological criteria. For the theological content in detail, see Larchet 1998b: 58–67.

66. Opusculum 12—Excerpt from the Letter of Maximus Sent to Peter Illustris

Ed. PG 91. 141A–146A; PL 129. 573B–576D (fragments in Latin). *CPG* 7697.12. Sherwood 1952: 52 nr 76 = 643/4; so also Larchet 1998b: 73; Winkelmann 2001: 110–11 nr 88.

*c.*645. Preserved in several excerpts translated in Latin in the ninth century by Anastasius Bibliothecarius; cf. *Letter A to Thalassius*. On the recipient, see the prosopographical section. Peter has written to Maximus about 'Abba Pyrrhus' (141A), the deposed patriarch of Constantinople, and in particular about whether the title

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sanctissimus or *almificus* should be applied to him (144A). Maximus declares himself ready to come up to Peter to refute Pyrrhus and all those who follow 'the impious novelty', suggesting that Peter and Pyrrhus are not far removed from him. Maximus fulminates against the attempts of the new heretics to impute responsibility for the quarrel to the innocent, such as Sophronius. He denounces the *Ekthesis*, perhaps alludes to the Council of Cyprus, and claims that Heraclius retracted it in a letter to the late Pope John IV (142B–143A, and cf. also *RM* 9, but see Rizou-Couroupos 1987 and Alexakis 1995–96). As in *Opusculum* 20 and the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (PG 91. 328B–329C), Maximus here alludes to the orthodox credentials of Arcadius of Cyprus and Popes Honorius, Severinus, and John IV, all now deceased (143A–B). As the Roman church has anathematized Pyrrhus, Maximus states that the latter should not be greeted with honorific titles until such time as the church receives him. Hence he should now hasten there: 'for he simply speaks in vain if he thinks that men like me need to be persuaded, and he does not satisfy and implore the most blessed pope of the most sacred church of the Romans' (144C). The letter dates from the pontificate of Theodore (143B14–15), and belongs to the same context as Maximus' disputation with Pyrrhus in Carthage in July 645, whether it precedes it (Sherwood 1952: 52) or is subsequent to it (Boudignon 2007: 256–7). We note also the strong statement of Roman preeminence contained within the text (144C), because of which some have doubted its authenticity; but it forms part of a wider pattern (Booth 2013: 269–76).

(p. 64) **67. Opusculum 5—Three Answers to Those Who Profess One Operation in Christ**

Ed. PG 91. 64A–65A. *CPG* 7697.5. Sherwood 1952: 37 nr 40 = 'by 633'; Larchet 1998b: 24 = 633.

Probably post-645. The text is divided into three sections, all of which are anti- monoenergist (64A–65A). These are against those who (1) argue for one operation in Christ on the grounds that 'the divine [operation], being more efficacious, dominates the human', (2) 'profess one operation of the divine and human natures, similarly to the single operation of the organ and of what moves it', and (3) 'profess one composite operation of Christ'. These three positions all strive to accommodate two natural operations—which they all implicitly posit, as recognized by Maximus (64A)—with a single operation of the person of Christ. After the ban on discussion of the operations in the *Psephos* and *Ekthesis*, which was respected in the patriarchs' official statements, we know little about the evolution of the position of the church of Constantinople on Christ's operation(s). Such official statements as the dogmatic letter of Patriarch Paul of 645 (*Acts of the Lateran Council*, Riedinger 1984: 196–204) and the profession of faith of Macarius of Antioch (*Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*, Riedinger 1990–92: 218–30) continue to emphasize the unity of one operating Christ. But we discover a position similar to the one opposed here by Maximus in some later texts from 656–58 (*DB, Ep. ad Anast.*). It is first evidenced in *Opusculum* 9 (645/6), where Maximus has been accused of once professing this himself, and where he refutes a patristic passage (from Heraclianus of Chalcedon) used to legitimize it. Our text therefore seems to date from well after the beginnings of the crisis, when Maximus' opponents were seeking accommodation with their critics by acknowledging not 'one' but 'one and two' operations. A later date is also suggested in the appearance of similar 'monoenergist' doctrines in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (296A–B, 333B–344A), which dates at the earliest to 645. It is, however, noteworthy that the concept of one composite operation was refuted at the Lateran Council on a different basis: not because it implied one composite nature of the Son (64D–65A), but because it led to the Son being 'alien to the Father, his operation and his essence being different, since the Father's own operation is not composite' (*Acts of the Lateran Council*, Riedinger 1984: 148). Maximus' silence on the wills does not exclude a late date. We see no reason to accept the modern consensus which places this text *before* the *Psephos* in 633/4, which would make it Maximus' earliest exposition on the operations. For discussion of the theological content, see Larchet 1998b: 24–5.

68. Opusculum 9—To the Holy Fathers, Hegoumens, Monks, and Orthodox People who Live Here on the Christ-Loving Isle of Sicily

Ed. PG 91. 112C–132D. *CPG* 7697.9. Sherwood 1952: 55 nr 86 = 646–8; the same in Larchet 1998b: 97.

Late 645 or 646. The title implies that Maximus wrote this treatise on Sicily, after a debate with its monks which apparently did not go well, judging from the apologetic (p. 65) tone of Maximus and the necessity of providing a written confirmation of what had earlier been said in person (113A; note also the absence of Sicilian bishops from the Lateran Council in 649). Faced with a wide-ranging critique of his earlier works, which were therefore broadly circulating already by that time, Maximus attempts to explain away some contentious statements. He rebuts the accusation that he had once advocated 'three operations' and 'three wills'—that is, one at the level of the union and two at the level of the natures (125C–128B). His detractors claimed that he had done so in a letter to Marinus,

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which Maximus claims never to have written (129B) but which might in fact refer to *Opusculum* 7 or, less probably, *Opusculum* 20, where he had defended monadic phrases in the Fathers. This is further suggested in the shared elucidation both here and there of Cyril's 'one operation' (124C–125C). Maximus also defends his earlier stance in *Letter* 19, in which he had lauded Sergius and, in particular, Pyrrhus, the monothelite patriarch of Constantinople. Maximus excuses his earlier tone with the claim that he was attempting to appease his correspondent through praise, and thus to bring him to a confession of 'two operations' (132A–B); in fact, he did not use such a formula. The context for the text is Maximus' travel from North Africa to Rome, where he apparently accompanied Pyrrhus after the disputation of July 645 (*DP*, PG 91. 353A); their joint presence on Sicily en route to Rome would make the questions over their earlier correspondence even more poignant. Sherwood's *terminus ante quem* is too late—Maximus was in Rome on the eve of, or during, the North African exarch Gregory's rebellion from Constantinople (*RM* 17. 54–62), which occurred in 647.

10. Towards the Lateran Council (*c.*647–49)

69. Opusculum 15—Spiritual and Dogmatic Tome … Written from Rome to Stephen the Most Holy Bishop of Dora, Who Belongs to the Holy and Apostolic Throne of the Holy City of Christ our God

Ed. PG 91. 153C–184C. *CPG* 7697.15. Sherwood 1952: 55 nr 87 = 646–47 (citing Pierres' 1940 doctoral thesis); Larchet (1998b: 26) gives the same date.

*c.*647. An anti-monoenergist and anti-monothelite florilegium, citing and interpreting various passages from scripture (157C–160C), the Fathers (160C–169A; 173C–176D), and from the heresiarchs (169A–173C; 177A–180B). There is an extended conclusion inveighing against innovation upon the faith of the Fathers and five councils (180B–184C). This florilegium was used for that of the Lateran Council (649) and must precede it; see Pierres (1940; *non vidimus*). From the title we ascertain that Maximus was in Rome, having arrived there in late 645 or 646. Stephen bishop of Dora (a coastal city of Palestine 15 km. north of Caesarea) is the erstwhile disciple and agent of Sophronius, who gives an account of his activities in the second session of the *Acts of the Lateran Council*. Pope Theodore had elected him as papal *vicarius* in the East, charged with the deposition of irregular bishops in the East (Booth 2013: 295–6). We can presume that (p. 66) our text was intended to aid his mission, as Maximus did not need to convince Stephen of his doctrine, and thus place that mission, and our text, *c.*647 (Jankowiak 2009: 235–7).

70. Opusculum 24—That One Cannot Say 'One Will' in Christ

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 731–2 (Text XII; 'between 638 and August 657'); PG 91. 268A–269D. *CPG* 7697.24. Sherwood 1952: 44 nr 62 = '*c.*640'; Ceresa-Gastaldo (cited in Larchet 1998b: 40) prefers 646–47, around the time of *Opusculum* 15.

After *c.*640, perhaps a little before 649. The text consists of two distinct parts (268A–C, 268C–269D), which Roosen regards as 'the composition of two excerpts from a longer and genuinely Maximian text which dealt with the refutation of the monothelite position and was written between 638 and August 657' (2001/3: 727 with n.20). The first defends the preservation of the properties of the natures in Christ, citing a sermon of Chrysostom which is also used in *Opusuclum* 15 and *Acts of the Lateran Council* (Riedinger 1984: 288); the second is addressed to an anonymous monothelite. Here, as elsewhere (e.g. *Opusc.* 6), Maximus mounts a brief challenge to the monothelite interpretation of Matthew 26: 39 ('not as I will, but as you') (268B) and commits to an outright statement of 'two wills' (268C), associating monothelitism with Severanism (269A), and challenging the recipient to offer patristic support for his position (269C). Sherwood suggests that the text belongs to the earliest stages of Maximus' public opposition to monothelitism *c.*640, when the arguments and proof texts were still developing on both sides. Alternatively, close parallels with the *Acts of the Lateran Council* (listed in Roosen 2001/4: 948–9 and 1030; see Riedeinger 1984: 148 and 288) may suggest a date a little before the council. The text is later cited in *Dispute at Bizya* (Roosen 2001/2: 503). See Roosen 2001/3: 721–7.

71. Opusculum 26b/Additamentum 24—Definitions of the Will

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 781–6 (Text XIV); Epifanovich 1917: 72–5 (*Add.* 24); PG 91. 276B–280B (*Opusc.* 26b). *CPG* 7697.26 and 7707.24. Not a separate item in Sherwood.

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A little before 649? See *Opusculum* 26a on the composite nature of this work. A florilegium of twenty patristic passages defining the will, destined to provide a patristic pedigree to Maximus' position on the wills. Most of the patristic quotations, in particular from the early Fathers such as Irenaeus of Lyon and Clement of Alexandria, are very probably dyothelite forgeries; others are rewritten passages of the original works (Roosen 2001/3: 751 n.15 and 757–71). Roosen (2001/3: 748–56) rejects Maximus' authorship on the basis of the quotation from Nemesius of Emesa's *De natura hominis* (277C), whose definition of προαίρεσις and βούλησις is applied in the florilegium to θέλησις, in contradiction with Maximus' punctilious differentiation of these terms in *Opusculum* 1. There is also no explicit attribution to Maximus in the manuscripts, and the florilegium contains passages from Maximus himself. But the first argument is not cogent in the case of a florilegium composed of forged patristic testimonies, and the same quotations appear elsewhere in Maximus' works (Roosen 2001/3: 753). We are thus inclined to include this florilegium, as well as a similar florilegium on the operations (*Opusc.* 27/*Add.* 25), in our date-list, even if its attribution to Maximus remains tentative. Roosen (p. 67) (2001/3: 755) suggests, among other possibilities, that it was composed in the period of a 'massive search for patristic material which must have taken place in preparing the acts of the Lateran synod'; see the section on *Opusculum* 27/*Additamentum* 25 for arguments supporting this date.

72. Opusculum 27/Additamentum 25—Definitions of the Operation

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 819–23 (Text XV); Epifanovich 76–7 (*Add.* 25); PG 91. 280B–285B (*Opusc.* 27). *CPG* 7697.27 and 7707.25. Sherwood 1952: 52–3 nr 77 = 'Between 640–6'. So also Larchet 1998b: 75.

A little before 649, but after *Opusculum* 15? The text is a florilegium similar in structure to *Opusculum* 26b/*Additamentum* 24 and probably composed by the same author (Roosen 2001/3: 790), but devoted to the notion of the operation. It similarly cites pseudepigraphical writings of the early Fathers (Justin Martyr, Alexander of Alexandria) and unidentified quotations from Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom, also likely to be forgeries (Roosen 2001/3: 791–805). One of the extracts comes from an otherwise unknown work sent by Sophronius to Pope Honorius (Roosen 2001/3: 801–4). The second part of the *Opusculum* is closely related to the florilegium on the operations in the *Acts of the Lateran Council* (Riedinger 1984: 258–69), but the direction of the influence is unclear: while Roosen 2001/3: 806–11 thinks that our *Opusculum* depends on the Lateran florilegium, one can also interpret it—and the twin florilegium in *Opusculum* 26b/*Additamentum* 24—as a blueprint for the more carefully edited version included in the *Acts of the Lateran Council*. Roosen (2001/3: 811–14) highlights a quotation from Ambrose (*De fide* 2.8.70), two Greek translations of which are found in the works of Maximus and his circle: a more correct one in *Opusculum* 15 (165C–168A) and *Doctrina Patrum* (ed. Diekamp 1981: 75 and 92), and a rewritten version here in *Opusculum* 27/*Additamentum* 25, in the Greek translation of the letter sent in 646 by bishops of Africa Proconsularis to Patriarch Paul of Constantinople that was included in the *Acts of the Lateran Council* (Riedinger 1984: 84), and in the florilegium on the operations in the same *Acts* (Riedinger 1984: 258). This suggests that our *Opusculum* is close in time to the Lateran Council (*pace* Roosen, it is not necessary to suppose that the African letter has been translated into Greek much before the council), and is possibly later than *Opusculum* 15 where the rendering of Ambrose is more literal, but less explicit. Our date of a little before 649 remains, however, tentative—as is Maximus' authorship—until a more thorough investigation of the dyothelite florilegia.

73. Opusculum 11—From a Letter Written in Rome

Ed. PG 91. 137C–140B. *CPG* 7697.11. Sherwood 1952: 56 nr 88 = 649; Larchet 1998b: 106 'peu après le synode du Latran (649)'.

After October 649 but before June 653. A short excerpt celebrating Roman preeminence within the church, manifested in its unwavering orthodox confession and guaranteed in the promise of Christ to St. Peter (137C–140B). The excerpt refers to the 'six councils', thus claiming the status of ecumenical council for the Lateran Council of October 649. According to the title, it was written before Maximus' (p. 68) arrest at Rome and deportation to Constantinople in 653. Some have doubted the authenticity of the text, but the celebration of Roman preeminence forms part of a wider pattern in Maximus' writings and those of his circle in this period; see Booth 2013: 269–76.

11. Maximus in Exile (655–62)

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74. Letter C—To Anastasius the Monk, his [sc. Maximus'] Disciple

Ed. Allen–Neil 1999: 160–3; PG 90. 132A–133A. *CPG* 7701. Sherwood 1952: 56 nr 90 = 'May 655'; date corrected by Allen–Neil (1999: xvi–xvii) to 19 April 658.

19 April 658. Maximus reports to his disciple Anastasius the Monk the visit of the envoys of the patriarch that he received 'yesterday, the eighteenth of the month, which was the holy Mid-Pentecost (μεσοπεντηκοστή)'. This can only correspond to the year 658. Earlier editors read πεντηκοστή, but the correct reading has been restored by Allen and Neil. The patriarch, no doubt Peter of Constantinople, announced to Maximus the restoration of communion between all the five patriarchs based on the expression of 'one and two' operations during the visit of papal legates to Constantinople. For the conciliatory policy of Pope Vitalian, bishop of Rome from 30 July 657, see Anastasius the Monk, *Letter to the Monks of Cagliari*;*LP* 78; Jankowiak 2009: 327–31.

75. Opusculum 26a, Additamentum 20, and Additamentum 38—Two Fragments from the Questions Put to Maximus the Confessor by Theodosius of Gangra

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 743–4 (Text XIII); Epifanovich 1917: 67–8 (*Add.* 20); PG 91. 276A–B (*Opusc.* 26a). *CPG* 7697.26, 7707.20, and 7707.38. Sherwood 1952: 45 nr 65 = '640?'; Larchet 1998b: 50 also places it with *Opusculum* 25, *c.*640.

A little before 656/7? *Opusculum* 26 consists of two parts: (a) two questions from 'Theodosius the monk, orthodox priest of Gangra', the first of which has been already edited by Combefis (276A–B, where he misreads the addressee as 'Theodore') and in an expanded form by Epifanovich (1917: 67–8, *Add.* 20), while the second has been first edited by Roosen, *Additamentum* 38; (b) a florilegium of patristic passages on the wills (276B–280B, see separate entry above). Maximus comments on two questions asked by Theodosius of Gangra: on the definitions of some central terms (nature, essence, individual, hypostasis), and on the difference between πρόγνωσις and προορισμός. It seems evident that the excerpts belong to a single work, composed in the question-and-answer genre evident in other Maximian works (*Amb.Io., Q.Thal.*); see also Roosen (2001/3: 733–9). The addressee is identified in the title of the second answer as 'Theodosius the monk, orthodox priest of Gangra', whose association with Maximus is best attested during the period of his exile (655–62); see the prosopographical section. *Additamentum* 38 (like *Opusc.* 24) was used in the *Dispute at Bizya* (Roosen 2001: 735), providing a *terminus ante quem* of 656/7. The work belongs, at any rate, to a developed stage of the monothelite crisis.

(p. 69)

12. Miscellanea

76. Letter 9—To Thalassius, Priest and Hegoumen

Ed. PG 91. 446C–449A. *CPG* 7699.9. Sherwood 1952: 33 nr 31 = '628/30?'; Larchet 1998a: 50 = between 628 and 630.

Date indeterminable. On the recipient, see the prosopographical section. Given the potential length of Maximus' association with Thalassius, the chronological precision of Sherwood and Larchet seems unwarranted. The letter dwells on free will, presenting human beings as positioned between God, nature, and the world, and with the potential to be carnal, physical, or spiritual. Maximus encourages Thalassius to take courage in the face of his persecution (448B–C), the context of which is unclear: if the context is Africa, one can perhaps think of some conflict with the pro-monothelite bishop of Carthage, Fortunius, in the first half of the 640s (see *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*, Riedinger 1990–92: 652).

77. Letter 21—To the Most Holy Bishop of Cydonia

Ed. PG 91. 604B–605B. *CPG* 7699.21. Sherwood 1952: 30 nr 21 = '627–33?'; Larchet 1998a: 45 = 626/7.

Date indeterminable, but perhaps early. A short christological statement in response to letters from the bishop, whom Maximus calls 'my master' (605A). Cydonia is a bishopric in western Crete; Maximus mentions a stay on the island in *Opusculum* 3, but at a time which is not clear. We can perhaps presume that he met the addressee on this occasion, although our letter need not be close to that meeting in time. In Maximus' play on the theme of finitude and infinitude in the Incarnation (604C–D), Larchet detects theological similarities with the *Ambigua*, encouraging an earlier date. We should also note that Maximus here refers to the priest as the image of Christ (604D), a theme

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which also appears in *Letters* 28 and 30, dated with some certainty to the period *c.*632.

78. Letter 25—To Conon, Priest and Superior

Ed. PG 91. 613A–D. *CPG* 7699.25. Sherwood 1952: 40 nr 45 = '633 or after'; cf. Larchet 1998a: 48.

Date indeterminable. Maximus apologizes for declining a summons (613B). Sherwood regards Conon as Maximus' superior after the departure of Sophronius from North Africa (hence his date), but there is in fact no basis for dating this to a particular period of Maximus' life. The expressions of submission to a hegoumen do not necessitate an earlier date.

79. Letter 26—To the Priest Thalassius, Who Asked Why Some of the Pagan Kings, Because of Divine Anger Assailing Their Subjects, Sacrificed Their Children and Relatives, and the Anger Subsided, as Many Ancients Report

Ed. PG 91. 616A–617B. *CPG* 7699.26. Sherwood 1952: 34 nr 32 = 'After 628' (so also Larchet 1998a: 50).

(p. 70) Date indeterminable (close to the *Q.Thal.*?). On the recipient, see the prosopographical section. Again, the potential length of Maximus' association with Thalassius, with whom he here expects to talk soon (617B), precludes a definite date. The letter concerns pagan kings sacrificing parents and children to appease God, and appears to belong to the tradition of the *Questions to Thalassius* rather than the *Letters*. It is tempting to read this text in the context of pregnant discussions concerning the role of the emperor in the appeasement of divine anger.

80. Letter 41—To Thalassius, Priest and Hegoumen

Ed. PG 91. 636B–C. *CPG* 7699.41. Sherwood 1952: 34 nr 35 = '630–34'.

Date indeterminable. The name of the addressee is spelled out in the *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7: τοῦ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν αὐτὸν Θαλάσσιον πρεσβύτερον καὶ ἡγούμενον; it follows upon *Letter* 9 to Thalassius. Maximus apologizes for refusing an invitation, but promises to come next time. He refers to the wife (?) of Bestitor (τῆς τοῦ Βεστίτορος), who is apparently taken care of by Thalassius. Bestitor (= Latin *vestitor*), if not a personal name, is a rank at the imperial court attested in seventh-century seals (see the index of Lilie et al. 1998–2002). But the precise import of this is unclear, and there are no firm chronological indicators.

81. Letter 42—To the Same (sc. Thalassius)

Ed. PG 91. 636C–637B. *CPG* 7699.42. Sherwood 1952: 25 nr 3 = 'When?'; so also Larchet 1998a: 50.

Date indeterminable. On the recipient, see the prosopographical section. Larchet suggests that the 'letter', which is a fragmentary interpretation of sections from the Old Testament, belongs to the tradition of the *Questions to Thalassius* (cf. *Ep.* 26). However, the conclusion, in which Maximus encourages his 'honourable father' to 'pray for your slave … who is constrained by many sins' (637A–B) suggests instead an independent letter. The date cannot be determined, except that it appears as a time of stress. The text appears to be better preserved in *Laurent. Plut.* 57.7 than suggested by the fragmentary edition of Combefis.

82. Opusculum 17—Definitions of Distinction

Ed. PG 91. 212C–D. *CPG* 7697.17. Sherwood 1952: 26–7 nr 14 = 'Of unascertainable date but probably early. By 626.' Larchet 1998b: 19 = 624–26.

Date indeterminable. A short paragraph on the definition of four forms of distinction.

83. Opusculum 21—On Quality, Property, and Difference, to Theodore, Priest in Mazara

Ed. PG 91. 245D–257A. *CPG* 7697.21. Sherwood 1952: 36–7 nr 39 = '633? 646?' Larchet 1998b: 22–3 prefers the latter date.

Date unclear, but perhaps *c.*633 or 645/6. Theodore has requested an exposition on 'quality, property, and difference' (248B) which Maximus then provides (248B–249C), appending a critique of the Severan application of

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the same terms to the Incarnation (p. 71) (249D–256D). Theodore's church, Mazara, lies in south-west Sicily, which suggests a date during one of the two stays of Maximus in the West. Which one? The statement of different christological operations corresponding to the difference of natures (253B, overlooked by Sherwood) is somewhat fleeting and—together with theological resonances with other early works and a parallel in *Letter* 13, where quality and difference are also discussed (513B–516C)—suggests an early date, when the issue was in the air but still somewhat nebulous. But this would mean this is the earliest *opusculum* of Maximus, which troubled Sherwood who, consequently, wondered if there might be a connection with Maximus' presence on Sicily in 645 en route to Rome (so also Larchet 1998b: 22). In either case it is surprising to find a Sicilian priest preoccupied with miaphysitism. Although an earlier date seems more probable, the later date cannot be discounted.

84. Opusculum 22

Ed. PG 91. 257A–260D. *CPG* 7697.22. Sherwood 1952: 25 nr 4 = 'Date?' Larchet 1998b: 18–19 does not commit to a date but implies it belongs to 'les premiers temps de sa vie monastique'.

Date indeterminable, perhaps early. The text consists of two excerpts of a longer work: in both, Maximus defends the accusation that Chalcedon has added to and contravened the Nicene Creed. There is no means of dating the text, but the content suggests a period in which Maximus was engaged in conversations with miaphysites, favouring an earlier date.

85. Additamentum 9—On the Divine Incarnation

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 627; Epifanovich 1917: 28–9. *CPG* 7707.9.

Date indeterminable. A short fragment on the Incarnation, possibly rewritten by Euthymius Zigabenos (Roosen 2001/3: 621–3).

86. Additamentum 14—On Truth and Piety

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 665; cf. Epifanovich 1917: 60–1. *CPG* 7707.14.

Date indeterminable. A short treatise on the threefold division of the soul and the four cardinal virtues. The manuscripts are unanimous in the attribution to Maximus, but the subject is a common one and the attribution is possible but uncertain (see Roosen 2001/3: 659–62).

87. Additamentum 26—Theorema

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 843–5 (Text XVII); Epifanovich 1917: 78–80. *CPG* 7707.26.

Date indeterminable. A diagram with commentary (such as those which accompany the *Computus*) representing the Trinity. The texts are taken from or inspired by *Theological and Economical Chapters*. Maximus' authorship has been contested, and it is not impossible that the diagram is the work of the sixteenth-century copyist Constantinus Paleocappas (Roosen 2001/3: 837–9).

(p. 72) 88. Additamentum 34—On the Isagoge of Porphry and Aristotle's Categories

Ed. Roosen 2001/3: 901–2; Roueché 1974: 70–1; Epifanovich 1917: 91–3. *CPG* 7707.34.

Date indeterminable. The text is a collection of excerpts from lectures on the *Isagoge* of Porphyry and Aristotle's *Categories* by David, a neo-Platonist philosopher active in Alexandria in the late sixth century. It is paralleled by a philosophical appendix to the still unedited *Letter to the Monks of Ascalon* by Anastasius Apocrisiarius (*CPG* 7734). Roosen (2001/3: 879–98) thinks that both texts share a common source, a work of philosophical definitions based on David's lectures that he is ready to attribute to Maximus. The same work is perhaps also reflected in the *Definitions (Ὅροι σὺν θεῷ εἰς τὴν εἰσαγωγὴν Πορφυρίου καὶ εἰς τὰς κατηγορίας Ἀριστοτέλους)* also attributed to Maximus (Roueché 1980). The text contains no elements for dating. Similarly, the *Letter to the Monks of Ascalon* can date from any time between 647/8, when we first hear of Anastasius Apocrisiarius, and his death in 666. The *Additamentum* 34—or its source used also by Anastasius Apocrisiarius—strongly supports the connection between Maximus and the philosophical school of Alexandria already postulated by Boudignon (2004: 15–17).

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89. Letter E—To an Unknown Recipient

Ed. Gitlbauer 1878: 84 (Text VIII). *CPG* 7709.1.

Date indeterminable. Fragment of a letter to an unknown recipient edited from the tachygraphic manuscript *Vat. gr.* 1809.

13. A Final Note on Some Further Texts Associated with Maximus

90. Trial Literature

Although not considered here, it is possible that Maximus is the author of the various texts contained within the so-called 'trial literature': the *DP* (*CPG* 7698), the *RM* (*CPG* 7736), and the *DB* (*CPG* 7735).[9]

91. Life of the Virgin

In a series of recent articles Stephen Shoemaker (esp. Shoemaker 2012), following Michel van Esbroeck, has argued in favour of Maximus' authorship of the Greek model for a Georgian *Life of the Virgin*. This is improbable for various reasons both historical and theological. In short: first, the argument depends on the notion that Maximus spent some time in Constantinople in the period *c.*620–26, which lacks direct attestation; second, none of Maximus' characteristic preoccupations appear in the *Life*, and in turn none of the *Life*'s (p. 73) central themes appear in the fleeting Marian reflections contained within his genuine corpus; third, there is no extant Greek manuscript which witnesses the text, in whole or in part; fourth, both admirers of Maximus (e.g. Sophronius, John of Damascus) and those who describe his works (e.g. Photius, Anastasius Bibliothecarius) show no knowledge of the *Life*; and fifth, there is no witness to the existence of the entire *Life* before the second half of the tenth century. For the arguments in more detail see Booth (forthcoming).

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Appendix

Concordances

(p. 79) (p. 80) (p. 81) (p. 82) (p. 83)

Table 2.1 List of Maximus' Works by their Latin Title, in Alphabetical Order

Latin title	Edition	Nr	Suggested date
Add. 9	Roosen 627	85	date indeterminable

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Add. 14	Roosen 665	86	date indeterminable
Add. 18	Roosen 681–2	63	after *c.*643
Add. 19	Roosen 689–91	64	after *c.*643
Add. 20	Roosen 743	75	little before 656/7?
Add. 21	Epifanovich 68–70	17	before 633/4?
Add. 22	Roosen 711–13		spurious
Add. 24	Roosen 781–6	71	little before 649?
Add. 25	Roosen 819–21	72	little before 649?
Add. 26	Roosen 843–5	87	date indeterminable
Add. 34	Roosen 901–2	88	date indeterminable
Add. 38	Roosen 744	75	little before 656/7?
Ambigua ad Iohannem	PG 91. 1061–1417; CCSG 18; Constas (2014)	3	early (before *c.*633/4)
Ambigua ad Thomam	PG 91. 1032–1060; CCSG 48: 1–34	38	634 or 635
Capita de caritate	PG 90. 960–1073; Ceresa-Gastaldo (1963)	2	early (before *c.*633/4)
Capita theologica et oeconomica	PG 90. 1084–1173	8	early
Capita XV	PG 90. 1177–1392	11	date indeterminable
Computus ecclesiasticus	PG 19. 1217–1280	29	Oct 640–Feb 641
De operationibus et uoluntatibus (*Opusc.* 2–3)	PG 91. 40A–56D	61	640–43
Ep. 1	PG 91. 364A–392B	49	*c.*640–42, perhaps early 642
Ep. 2	PG 91. 392D–408B	25	before or *c.*633?
Ep. 3	PG 91. 408C–412C	26	before 636?
Ep. 4	PG 91. 413A–420C	27	before 642
Ep. 5	PG 91. 420C–424C	21	*c.*628
Ep. 6	PG 91. 424C–433A	13	*c.*628

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Ep. 7	PG 91. 433A–440B	14	Aug 628
Ep. 8	PG 91. 440C–445B	30	June–Aug 632
Ep. 9	PG 91. 446C–449A	76	date indeterminable
Ep. 10	PG 91. 449A–453A	28	before 642
Ep. 11	PG 91. 453A–457D	47	640/1
Ep. 12	PG 91. 460A–509B	48	Nov 641 or soon after
Ep. 13	PG 91. 509B–533A	15	629–33?
Ep. 14	PG 91. 533B–543C	37	*c.*633
Ep. 15	PG 91. 543C–576D	36	*c.*633
Ep. 16	PG 91. 576D–580B	54	*c.*640–42, perhaps 642
Ep. 17	PG 91. 580C–584D	55	c.640–41?
Ep. 18	PG 91. 584D–589B	46	640/1
Ep. 19	PG 91. 589C–597B	35	late 633 or early 634
Ep. 20	PG 91. 597B–604B	40	636?
Ep. 21	PG 91. 604B–605B	77	date indeterminable
Ep. 22	PG 91. 605B–C	53	*c.*640–42, perhaps 642
Ep. 23	PG 91. 605D–608B	19	*c.*632 or 642
Ep. 24 = *Ep.* 43	PG 91. 608B–613A	22	628–29
Ep. 25	PG 91. 613A–D	78	date indeterminable
Ep. 26	PG 91. 616A–617B	79	date indeterminable
Ep. 27	PG 91. 617B–620C	24	*c.*630?
Ep. 28	PG 91. 620C–621B	31	*c.*632
Ep. 29	PG 91. 621C–624A	32	*c.*632
Ep. 30	PG 91. 624A–D	33	*c.*632
Ep. 31	PG 91. 624D–625D	34	*c.*632

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Epp. 32–9	PG 91. 625D–633B	56	*c.*636–40
Ep. 40	PG 91. 633C–636A	20	*c.*634?
Ep. 41	PG 91. 636B–C	80	date indeterminable
Ep. 42	PG 91. 636C–637B	81	date indeterminable
Ep. 43 = *Ep.* 24	PG 91. 637B–641C	22	628–29
Ep. 44	PG 91. 641D–648C	50	*c.*640–42, perhaps early 642
Ep. 45	PG 91. 648D–649C	52	*c.*640–42, perhaps 642
Ep. A	PL 129, 583D–586B	58	640
Ep. B	Epifanovich 84–5	51	*c.*640–42, perhaps early 642
Ep. C	CCSG 39: 160–3	74	19 Apr 658
Ep. D	Inedita	23	before 633?
Ep. E	Gitlbauer (1878) 84	89	date indeterminable
Ep. secunda ad Thomam	CCSG 48: 37–49	39	635 or 636
Expositio in Psalmum lix	PG 90. 856–872; CCSG 23: 3–22	6	early
Liber Asceticus	PG 90. 912–956; CCSG 40	1	early (before *c.*633/4)
Mystagogia	PG 91. 657–717; CCSG 69	9	early (before *c.*636)
Opusc. 1	PG 91. 9A–37A	44	643–46
Opusc. 2	PG 91. 40A–45B	61	640–43
Opusc. 3	PG 91. 45B–56D	61	640–43
Opusc. 4	PG 91. 56D–61D	57	c.640?
Opusc. 5	PG 91. 64A–65A	67	after *c.*645?
Opusc. 6	PG 91. 65A–68D	59	*c.*640–41?
Opusc. 7	PG 91. 69B–89B	41	c.640–41?
Opusc. 8	PG 91. 89C–112B	60	*c.*640–41?

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Opusc. 9	PG 91. 112C–132D	68	late 645 or 646
Opusc. 10	PG 91. 133A–137C; PL 129, 577A–578B	43	Jun–Jul 643?
Opusc. 11	PG 91. 137C–140B	73	649–53
Opusc. 12	PG 91. 141A–146A	66	*c.*645
Opusc. 13	PG 91. 145A–149A	16	before 633/4?
Opusc. 14/*Add.* 21	PG 91. 149B–153B	17	before 633/4?
Opusc. 15	PG 91. 153C–184C	69	*c.*647
Opusc. 16	PG 91. 184C–212A	65	after 641
Opusc. 17	PG 91. 212C–D	82	date indeterminable
Opusc. 18	PG 91. 213A–216A;Van Deun (2000b)	18	perhaps *c.*634/5
Opusc. 19	PG 91. 216B–228A	45	perhaps 645
Opusc. 20	PG 91. 228B–245D	42	641
Opusc. 21	PG 91. 245D–257A	83	*c.*633 or 645/6?
Opusc. 22	PG 91. 257A–260D	84	date indeterminable
Opusc. 23a–c, *Add.* 22	PG 91. 260D–268A; Roosen 711–13, 719, 833–5		spurious
Opusc. 24	PG 91. 268A–269D; Roosen 731–2	70	little before 649?
Opusc. 25	PG 91. 269D–273D	62	after *c.*643
Opusc. 26a, *Add.* 20 and 38	PG 91. 276A-B; Roosen 743–4	75	little before 656/7?
Opusc. 26b/*Add.* 24	PG 91. 276B–280B; Roosen 781–6	71	little before 649?
Opusc. 27/*Add.* 25	PG 91. 280B–285B; Roosen 819–23	72	little before 649?
Orationis dominicae expositio	PG 90. 872–909; CCSG 23: 27–73	7	early (before *c.*636)
Quaestiones ad Thalassium	PG 90. 244–785; CCSG 7 and 22	4	early (before *c.*633/4)
Quaestiones ad Theopemptum	PG 90. 1393–1400; Roosen and Van Deun (2003)	12	date indeterminable
Quaestiones et dubia	PG 90. 785–856; CCSG 10	5	early (before *c.*633/4)

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Scholia in corpus Areopagiticum	PG 4. 16–432 and 528–576	10	date indeterminable

Table 2.2 List of Maximus' Works by the Number in Sherwood's *Date-List*

Sherwood nr	Latin title	Number
1	*Ep.* 5	21
2	*Ep.* 22	53
3	*Ep.* 42	81
4	*Opusc.* 22	84
5	*Ep.* 6	13
6	*Ep.* 2	25
7	*Ep.* 3	26
8	*Ep.* 4	27
9	*Ep.* 10	28
10	*Liber Asceticus*	1
11	*Capita de caritate*	2
12	*Expositio in Psalmum lix*	6
13	*Quaestiones et dubia*	5
14	*Opusc.* 17	82
15	*Opusc.* 13	16
16	*Ep.* 28	31
17	*Ep.* 30	33
18	*Ep.* 29	32
19	*Ep.* 8	30
20	*Ep.* 31	34
21	*Ep.* 21	77
22	*Opusc.* 18	18

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23	*Opusc.* 23a–c	Spurious
24	*Ep.* 7	14
25	*Orationis dominicae expositio*	7
26	*Ambigua ad Iohannem*	3
27	*Mystagogia*	9
28	*Ep.* 24 = *Ep.* 43	22
29	*Ep.* 27	24
30	*Ep.* 23	19
31	*Ep.* 9	76
32	*Ep.* 26	79
33	*Ep.* 20	40
34	*Ep.* 40	20
35	*Ep.* 41	80
36	*Quaestiones ad Thalassium*	4
37	*Capita theologica et oeconomica*	8
37a	*Capita XV*	11
38	*Ep.* 17	55
39	*Opusc.* 21	83
40	*Opusc.* 5	67
41	*Quaestiones ad Theopemptum*	12
42	*Ep.* 19	35
43	*Ambigua ad Thomam*	38
44	*Ep.* 13	15
45	*Ep.* 25	78
46	*Ep.* 15	36
47	*Ep.* 14	37

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48	*Opusc.* 4	57
49	*Opusc.* 20	42
50	*Opusc.* 14/*Add.* 21	17
51–8	*Epp.* 32–39	56
59	*Ep.* 11	47
60	*Ep.* A	58
61	*Opusc.* 8	60
62	*Opusc.* 24	70
63	*Opusc.* 25	62
64	*Opusc.* 6	59
65	*Opusc.* 26a, *Add.* 20 and 38	75
65	*Opusc.* 26b/*Add.* 24	71
65a	*Computus ecclesiasticus*	29
66	*Ep.* 12	48
67	*Ep.* 18	46
68	*Ep.* 16	54
69	*Ep.* 1	49
70	*Ep.* 44	50
71	*Ep.* B	51
72	*Ep.* 45	52
73	*Opusc.* 7	41
74	*Opusc.* 16	65
75	*Opusc.* 19	45
76	*Opusc.* 12	66
77	*Opusc.* 27/*Add.* 25	72

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78	*Disputatio cum Pyrrho*	90
79	*Opusc.* 10	43
80	*Opusc.* 1	44
81	*Opusc.* 2	61
82	*Opusc.* 3	61
83–5	*Opusc.* 3a–c	61
86	*Opusc.* 9	68
87	*Opusc.* 15	69
88	*Opusc.* 11	73
89	*Relatio motionis*	90
90	*Ep.* C	74
91	*Disputatio Bizyae*	90

Notes:

([1]) *Prologue to the Spiritual Meadow*, with *Epitome of the Life of John the Almsgiver* 16 (Cyprus) and John Moschus, *Spiritual Meadow*, *Spiritual Meadow* 30 (Cyprus), 108 (Samos).

([2]) On which see *DB* 149–51; *Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council*, ed. Riedinger 1990–2: 228–30; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 11.9, Chabot 1899: 423–7 (text); 1910: 433–7 (trans.); *Anonymous Chronicle to 1234*, Chabot 1916: 130; and also Jankowiak 2013c.

([3]) *Ferrarensis* 144, f. 100^{v}, in Martini 1896: 344: πρὸς Μαρῖνον τὸν ὁσιώτατον πρεσβύτερον καὶ οἰκονόμον τῆς ἁγιωτάτης μητροπόλεως Κωνσταντίας τῆς Κυπρίων νήσου.

([4]) See Laga–Steel 1980: lxxvi–lxxxii; Laga–Steel 1990: xlv–xlviii;De Vocht 1987: 415–20.

([5]) E.g. in *Epp.* 8 and 14 (540B); *Car.* 2.31; *Amb.Io.* (1132A); but also in *Ep.* 12 (497D), and *DB* 93. 211.

([6]) See also Epifanovich 1917: xiii, and Canart 1964: 426 n.1.

([7]) See e.g. Kaegi 2003: 218; Boudignon 2004: 18–20; *contra* Hoyland 1997: 77 n.75; Booth 2013: 231.

([8]) Booth 2013: 261 n.138; Jankowiak 2009: 139–49 and 197–9.

([9]) For the first, see the discussion in Noret 1999; for the second, Brandes 1998: 155 n.90, and Allen–Neil 2002: 35–6; and for the third, Brandes 1998: 156 and 205, and Allen–Neil 2002: 36–7.

Marek Jankowiak

Marek Jankowiak is a research associate at the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford.

Phil Booth

Phil Booth is A. G. Leventis Lecturer in Eastern Christianity in the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford.

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Byzantium in the Seventh Century

Walter Kaegi

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Abstract and Keywords

The author discusses the imperilled legitimacy of Byzantium in the seventh century, and the survival of a venerable and prestigious bureaucratic empire in an era of rapid change, which included the advent of Islam. He considers the heavy heritage of old bureaucratic structures that were both an asset and a liability. Internal military and political strife included unprecedented violent imperial succession crises and issues of legitimacy, the ambivalent legacy of Emperor Heraclius, and the Heraclian dynasty's repeated succession crises. The author assesses the adequacy of issues of ethnic, linguistic, and religious divisiveness in the seventh century as explanations for political and military defeats and revival. The nadir of the internal and external crises was reached between 640 and 675 despite imperial efforts to strengthen ties of political and military loyalty. The appearance of Islam created unprecedented challenges, and Byzantine attempts to cope included military and diplomatic strategies.

Keywords: Heraclius, seventh century, Byzantine Empire, crisis, Heraclian dynasty, military strategy, diplomacy, succession crisis, Islam

SEVENTH-CENTURY Byzantium belongs to no neat category of historical periodization. Its classification remains controversial. The seventh century in modern Byzantine historiography sometimes receives the classification as the beginning of a 'Dark Age' or 'Dark Ages' of Byzantine history and society; at other times it receives the description of a bridge or watershed or beginning of middle Byzantine history. The seventh century becomes one of several centuries of Byzantine history sometimes identified as 'dark centuries', or simply as a period of silence. One can question whether it represented a sharp break with Late Antiquity or early Byzantium or not, or instead some kind of a transition between Byzantine 'periods'. It would be an exaggeration to label it the end of antiquity. The century straddles antiquity and the Middle Ages. It can stimulate historians to debate terminology, chronology, and subjective periodization (Haldon 1997; Kountoura-Galake 2001).

The empire began the century as a vigorous participant which shared a bi-polar universe with one other imperial power that was non-Christian—the Zoroastrian Sasanian Persia—but that bi-polar world did not actually involve any partition of the Mediterranean at the start of the century, for the Sasanians did not then possess direct access to any section of Mediterranean shore. Change very swiftly occurred in the seventh century (see Map 1 at the end of the chapter). The empire and its political, military, and ecclesiastical leadership found it necessary during the course of the century to adjust and adapt grudgingly to the realities of sharing some power and wealth in the Mediterranean with a mix of assertive western polities and the papacy, as well as with a new and temporarily ostensibly unified and formidable Muslim religious and political power (Haldon 2005: 28–62; Kaegi 2003a). The Mediterranean had often served in the past as a cockpit for competitive powers across millennia. The seventh was one century in which the Mediterranean's historic role as a cockpit re-emerged for tests between ruthless and fierce competitors. In no decade of the seventh century did Byzantium ever (p. 85) experience tranquillity, respite, or stability. Change, international competition, and other pressures remained relentless.

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Historians' opinions on Byzantium in the seventh century have shifted significantly in the past forty, let alone, fifty years, although no consensus has yet solidified. Many policy options for policies appeared open to the imperial government at the beginning of the century (Kaegi 2003a: 58–99; Kaegi 2010: 41–5). Views of scholars have changed on social, economic, military, religious, and cultural conditions. Surface and underwater archaeology and satellite photography have altered perspectives, as have rethinking old paradigms, as well as new translations and editions of texts from other languages.

Many of the traditional configurations in wider Mediterranean society collapsed in the seventh century as complex societies experienced breakdown from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. Byzantium suffered likewise. Some might describe the most fundamental change as one that involved the disappearance of most ancient cities and reduction of the residue to small familial and kinship units. Several hierarchies existed: city–local, military, educational/cultural, imperial, palatine, and ecclesiastical. City elites in Emperor Heraclius' era (610–41) were loosely constituted groups (Haldon 2004a).

The fate of older Byzantine elite families in the seventh century remains controversial. It is very difficult to trace kinship ties from the middle of the seventh century back to 550 or earlier among important families in the east or in Italy. Genealogical links are hard to confirm. In all likelihood some prominent families did survive from the sixth century far into the seventh century and beyond. Lasting identities were constructed in the post-Roman world. However, no family could reliably trace its ancestry between 400 and 800. These included some former senatorial elite families. In any event, their numbers and economic strength diminished (Haldon 2004b).

Byzantine Bureaucracy

In the midst of this process a centralized Constantinopolitan governing class emerged. Social and cultural power was concentrated more than ever at Constantinople in the seventh century, by default. Older urban elites and provincial elites who managed to survive were forced into central governmental hierarchies as central government strove to maintain its own power and authority. A pseudo-meritocracy of service evolved to incorporate any remaining members or survivors of the old elites. Access to the bureaucracy largely depended on a relatively privileged social-economic background, and such officials tended to invest and reinvest their earnings from service to the imperial government in land, irrespective of whether that land lay close to or distant from Constantinople. Day-to-day imperial business was handled by a select group of leading civil and military administrators at court, while the Constantinopolitan senate comprised leading officials of state, retired and active and all those of *illustris* rank in the region of Constantinople. Emperors depended on members of the senatorial (p. 86) elite for the leading military and civil officials of the state, and needed their support in moments of internal crisis. The senate included a broad cross-section of upper levels of society who shared a common urban culture. Possession of an imperial post of some kind or a titular or honorary one provided a common element. There was a service aristocratic element and newcomers who received promotion through state service, supplemented from officials with senatorial titles who invested in land and retired to the provinces and progressively obtained imperial posts and titles. The court and emperor were essential in selection of leading officials and rank-holders in the bureaucracy and in the Constantinopolitan senate. A court-centred, imperial meritocracy or pseudo-meritocracy developed that included members of the older establishment who competed with newer members of the governmental administrative structures.

Exceptions to this bureaucratic *cursus* were those foreigners who rose through military service. Social solidarity derived from status, title, familial connections, and patronage. By 600 a numerous but very localized middle stratum of landowners existed in the provinces, which represented the main element from whom provincial governors appointed fiscal and other officials, some of whom challenged the powers of the greatest landowners.

A wealthy urban elite was thriving in many provinces in the late sixth and early seventh century. Probably there was some continuity in membership of senatorial establishment and in landed wealth, at least into the late seventh century. Patterns of investment wealth changed as priorities changed. Urban centres remained local foci of exchange and modest commodity production, as well as of economic activity of large landowners, until at least the 620s.

The Advent of Islam

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The greatest change and challenge for Byzantium, which was contemporary with the lifetime of Maximus the Confessor, was the completely unanticipated emergence and solidification of a new prophetic religion, Islam, which spread by missionary zeal, warfare, and skilful diplomacy to half of the lands bordering the Mediterranean and beyond. The rapidity and scale of its expansion was remarkable in the seventh century. The early Islamic conquests were not the result of one unitary impulse, but the outcome of coordinated and conscious strategic decisions (Kennedy 2007; Kaegi 1995). The greatest material prize, Egypt, fell to the Muslims as a result of deliberate and coordinated planning, and suffered comprehensive conquest. Coping with Islam and the Arabs associated with its appearance occupied Byzantine policymakers, civilians, and clergy of the cities, countryside and monasteries. Islam was non-existent at the start of the century but had become a solid part of reality by the end of the century, when its future scope of expansion and maturation was still in question (see Map 2 at the end of the chapter). In the early decades of the century Islam might still be defined as proto-Islam, something still in process of formation (p. 87) and definition. It took time for Byzantine leaders to adjust to the existence of the new political and military power of a newly revealed religion, rather than the old clichés about nomadic Saracens (Donner 2010).

Trade Relations

The Byzantine Empire engaged in trade in every direction by land and sea, including with traders of products from the Arabian peninsula. There is, however, no evidence that, in order to defend its Syrian territories from Persia, the Byzantine Empire needed to import, or did import, vast leather supplies from the distant Arabian peninsula (*contra* Crone 2007). The Byzantine Empire could find plenty of sheep within its own borders, whether in Syria or in nearby Anatolia, from its numerous and sizeable Mediterranean islands, or even from North Africa and western Egypt. It had many options for procuring leather without depending on supplies from the Arabian peninsula.

There were many uncertainties for Byzantium. It was the era of the rising importance of horse warfare in much of the organized world, not only in lands bordering or close to the Mediterranean, but also far away in contemporary Tang China and its steppe borders. The camel and other pack-animals were also important for military logistics and private transportation and as stores of wealth that could be traded and exchanged.

Military Power

Byzantium's military forces appeared to be sound after suppressing or halting several mutinies along the empire's lengthy and irregular eastern frontiers. The government could deploy armed forces by land or by water from one end of the Mediterranean to the other. Less certain was its ability to control and hold power over territories beyond the coastline. Political unease accelerated as self-confidence fluctuated, then plummeted in the wake of sixth-century natural disasters, climatic changes, and ominous political–military symptoms, such as troublesome and costly raids and invasions by various tribes on its northern frontiers. Byzantium found itself imperilled by other very different tribal formations and groupings from the Arabian and North African arid and semi-arid zones. 'Tribes' can have many meanings, and indeed many different sorts of tribes challenged the empire at its periphery as well as in its interior. Yet, as the century began, the empire seemed to be managing to adapt successfully to changing ethnicities on its borders and to novel military technologies. Its forces had adopted the stirrup, which aided them in mounted warfare (especially shock tactics) and in mastery of the horse for other needs and objectives (Gingrich 2012: 38–9). The empire's institutions and practices (p. 88) had not petrified. No political, military, fiscal, or cultural sclerosis had taken hold, but appearances were deceptive.

The *Strategikon* of Maurice provides a glimpse of the empire's fighting techniques and those of many of its foes around the year 600 but it does not explain everything. It exercised seminal influence on subsequent Byzantine military manuals. Emperor Maurice (582–602) may be responsible for its composition but the authorship is in dispute. It is a manual of the art of military command, including discipline, tactics, stratagems, and ways of fighting other peoples, but offers no budgetary and statistical specifics. It conspicuously omits any discussion of how to fight Arabs and parts of it had become obsolete by the end of the seventh century.

In contrast to the *Strategikon*, which concentrates on military matters, no manual of seventh-century Byzantine statecraft survives. Statecraft nevertheless remained critical in the seventh century, for Byzantine leaders relied on statecraft to accomplish their objectives along with, or instead of, outright war (Maurice, *Strategicon*, Dennis–

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Gamillscheg 1981).

The empire's leaders had no compunctions in hiring or making opportunistic alliances with alien ethnics for diplomatic and military purposes. So Turkic, Amazigh (sometimes called Berber), Arab, and Bulgar forces were recruited when practicable. The empire's military forces were often polyglot and included diverse religions and diverse Christian sects within their ranks. Such arrangements were inherently unstable and subject to volatility and change.

The empire's heterogeneous civilian population was not represented in any strict proportion in the demographic composition of its armies. Some ethnicities, regions, and languages enjoyed disproportionate participation, while presumed efficient and warlike foreign ethnics contributed heavily to the selective diversity that prevailed within the armies, but this pluralistic and polyglot empire never fused into a really integrated one in the seventh century or later. In the seventh century, it was not a commonwealth at any time. It did not seek to be democratic and it was not. The imperial Byzantine experience did revolve around Constantinople, but at the same time the empire was far more than the city on the Bosporus together with its environs. It is true that in spite of fluctuating, shifting, and porous territorial borders, the empire possessed a more or less secure and stable centre at Constantinople where political and religious authority resided. Diversity existed in this polycentric empire tempered by cooperation, but rent by tension. It is a challenge for historians to provide a reliable and integrated vision of this diverse yet interconnected world.

The empire drew on foreign peoples for military purposes in the seventh century as it had done in previous centuries, but something was different. The specific foreign peoples changed for alliances and recruitment. Byzantium's leadership had long ago established the practice of avoiding allowing itself to develop dependence on any one foreign warlike people for military defences. Its successive leaders endeavoured to continue to try to follow that policy throughout the seventh century. The greatest single change in the seventh century was its policy towards Arabs (Kaegi 1981: 1–63).

(p. 89) Reasons for Decline

Difficult to understand is how and why the empire within a span of fifty to a hundred years went from being the dominant economic, cultural, and military power in the Mediterranean to one whose very existence was at stake. Environmental and climatic changes are inadequate as explanatory factors. Some scholars theorize collapse of city-based social groupings that were replaced by identification of individuals with small units such as the family. The economic regression that indisputably took place in south-eastern Europe, civil wars, and internal strife impeded imperial military effectiveness in the seventh century but one cannot attribute all the empire's failings to them.

At the beginning of the seventh century the empire may have contained a population of 20 million, but that figure probably dropped precipitously during the century in the wake of territorial losses. It may have fallen to 7 to 10 million by the eighth century, but any numbers are ultimately conjectural. There are no solid statistics. Reliable documentation does not exist. The concentration of its combat forces seldom reached 10–20,000 for any military campaign after the 630s.[1]

Greek was the day-to-day language of government and of many of its population, especially at Constantinople. But pockets of Latin speakers existed in many regions, including the largest islands in the Mediterranean, North Africa, the remnants of Italy still under imperial control, and in parts of the Balkans. Large numbers spoke neither Greek nor Latin, but late Aramaic (Syriac) and Arabic, Coptic in Egypt, Armenian, and Georgian, as well as other languages of the Caucasus. A precise linguistic census is impractical for any part of the empire in any part of the seventh century because reliable sources do not exist.

It is speculative to suggest that the Heraclian dynasty's embarrassment with imperial defeats and territorial losses explains the absence of any surviving Byzantine history from the seventh century. It is possible to rephrase the generalization slightly to hypothesize that no coherent overall narrative survives, possibly because contemporaries were uncertain about the outcomes of contemporary events and trends. Scraps of a lost history of Trajan the Patrician and Syriac chronicles offer fragmentary information, including some valuable details of chronology (Cameron–Conrad 1992; Howard-Johnston 2010). Such explanations are impossible to corroborate, of

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course. Two very controversial primary sources, the *Chronicle of Monemvasia,* which may date much later than the seventh century, and the *Life and Miracles of St Demetrius*, offer sketchy reports about events on the south-eastern European mainland.[2]

The anti-Jewish dialogue or polemic *Doctrina Jacobi* dates from the third decade of the seventh century and contains disjointed, but valuable, insights into contemporary passions, nostalgia, anger, and fears (Dagron–Déroche 2010). Hagiography offers precious (p. 90) scraps of information about seventh-century Byzantium at irregular moments and only for certain localities and towns. The *Lives* of Theodore of Syceon and Anastasius the Persian, and Leontius of Neapolis' *Life of John of Cyprus* each offer incomplete gleanings.[3] Their authors did not intend to write a coherent chronological narrative and description, for they were not, and did not seek to be, historians. Nevertheless, they offer different kinds of insights into the practices and mentality of seventh-century Byzantium.

Non-literary sources offer limited insights, albeit important, into seventh-century Byzantium. Archaeology offers scattered traces and testimonials from a seventh-century ship and its cargo found at Yassi Ada (near Bodrum, Turkey, or ancient Halicarnassus) (Bass–van Doornick 1982; Schick 1995), and from excavations at Corinth, Timgad, Algeria, Caesarea Maritima (Israel), Jerash (Gerasa), Jordan, Alexandria, Egypt, and from buildings such as the Column of Phocas and the old senate building (*curia*) in the Roman Forum. This is only a partial list.

Another form of non-literary source, imperial coinage, provides other evidence. The empire's coinage, especially its gold coinage (*solidus, nomisma*), embodied and proclaimed imperial international prestige during the entire century. It represented the empire. Imperial gold, silver, and bronze coinages and the images stamped thereon provided a tangible means of communicating images and symbols of imperial power and stability to those who had access to coined money in circulation. Lead seals authenticated documents and receipts with imperial symbols. So could and did imperial parades, processions and imperial images painted or mounted on wood or other backing.

The seventh-century empire publicly sought not only divine aid but also 'renewal' (*ananeosis*) on some of its coinage. This venerable concept of renewal dated back to Constantine I (308–37) and his coinage, and even well before him (Kaegi 1995: 218).[4] The meaning of renewal in the seventh century was imprecise, but apparently expressed general expectations for improvement, and was a medium through which the government sought to cultivate popular support and raise morale. It is certain that the government and its leaders did seek to arouse and encourage morale and political enthusiasm among its subjects. This is evident from its coinage and from scraps of papyri, and even from testimonials of hostile Muslim outsiders such as al-Azdi al-Basri, the compiler of the *Futuh al-Sham* (ʿMuṣṭafā ʿUqlam and Aḥmad Banī Yāsīn 2004).

Byzantine Foreign Policy

Other unknowns in the year 600 lay in the future, but there was no reason to anticipate that imperial leaders and advisers could not manage to confront external military challenges. Byzantine diplomats were able to tap into diverse sources of information and (p. 91) intelligence to enable leaders to undertake the conceptualization and eventual conduct of successful foreign policy. The antennae of its traditionally well-honed intelligence remained alert, even though there were major miscalculations and embarrassments. No perfect and steady flow of information reached governmental decision-makers in the imperial palace, but governmental decisions did not always conform to a rational frame of reference, sometimes seeming impulsive and reactive to alien initiatives. Byzantine diplomacy strove persistently to accomplish comprehensive contact with powers (polities, tribes, fortified strategic towns) that were politically and militarily significant. It sought to minimize its own casualties, for military manpower was precious. Byzantine strategic planners assumed changing power structures on their periphery. They could draw on spies and diplomatic reports but also on the earlier accumulated military and political wisdom of Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman empires. Even religious institutions and their clerics were able to provide additional intelligence on the movements of peoples and changing challenges, and occasionally on budgetary matters. Merchants also brought useful information on many subjects of interest to the government. The essential outlines of the relevant parts of the world appeared to be perceptible, but the still sizeable dimensions of the empire and the slowness of travel impeded accurate and decisive interpretation of information, decision-making and feedback.[5]

One definite overall impression is the underlying inter-connectedness of coastal regions of the empire. News

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spread by and among merchants, shipping crews and captains, caravans, clerics, and refugees from port to port on the Mediterranean and from oasis to oasis deep in the back country. Not every locality and village was closely linked, but many were. The imperial government and local governmental administrations had no monopoly on information and news. However, the accuracy of disseminated news was far from certain.

Virtually non-stop seventh-century warfare was costly even when the empire won occasional victories. War affected every corner of the empire. However, no comprehensive reliable budget for the Byzantine Empire or its armies exists at any point in the seventh century, and efforts to estimate that budget deserve caution and scepticism. The severity and duration of seventh-century wars impelled a frantic search throughout the empire, on land, sea, and islands, for the means to fund the wars, including of course desperate and ruthless recourse to finding and seizing precious metals, even those stored in the form of religious objects such as reliquaries or décor in ecclesiastical properties and edifices. Fiscal officials spared no one and nothing. These actions unsurprisingly elicited vociferous complaints from ecclesiastics, including the papacy, and from property-owning wealthy elites. No simple solution existed to solve fiscal exigencies and no fiscal genius appeared to devise any workable but painless formula to produce desired streams of revenues. Military priorities crowded out or at least severely limited public spending on non-military objectives.

(p. 92) Starting in the 630s, Byzantine imperial governmental leaders strenuously sought to prevent unauthorized local negotiations and agreements between local leaders and newly emergent Muslim commanders, whether in Syria-Palestine, Upper Mesopotamia, Egypt, or North Africa. These efforts by central authorities met with limited success.

The Empire in the Time of Maximus

The empire's fortunes gyrated violently during Maximus the Confessor's lifetime. The empire had not quite plummeted to its greatest political and military point of peril at his death. It is unrealistic to expect some neat and precise chart or graph to pinpoint such levels of peril. Maximus was contemporary with momentous events and changes for the empire, its armies, and its subjects and their regions and towns and cities. Cascading problems threatened to overwhelm the political and ecclesiastical leadership. Seventh-century Byzantium experienced the loss of many major cities: Alexandria, Carthage, Jerusalem, and Antioch, all major demographic centres as well as centres of economic activity, culture, and administrative control. The city of Rome itself was no longer securely Byzantine. Therefore, given those losses, the preponderance of Constantinople within the empire grew during the seventh century. It was always essential to the empire and to its identity, and it became increasingly a magnet for investment of personal wealth in government offices and senatorial and palace titles. There was a general contraction of municipal culture and wealth outside Constantinople. Subjects and outside observers agreed. There was discord about how to extricate the empire from its evident political, military, and financial perils, while others worried about religious perils. Dangling remnants of the empire in Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica persisted tenuously under Byzantine control to the end of the seventh century and beyond.

The most difficult period of the empire's internal and external crises in the seventh century were the thirty-five or forty years between 640 and 675. After that, the downward spiral of Byzantine power halted, the empire recovered some confidence, although perhaps not as much as its leadership publicly exuded. What remained of the empire and its governing elites now, in the second half of the century, adapted and reached de facto accommodation with the changed distribution of international power relationships in the Mediterranean and inland in the Balkans and western Asia, but no fixed state of equilibrium prevailed.

Muslims, for their part, after consolidating control of their conquests, viewed seventh-century Byzantium from the multiple perspectives of Medina, and recently occupied Damascus, Antioch, and Alexandria.

Greek fire, the igneous petroleum mixture that could destroy wooden ships and their sails, emerged as a major technical invention in the seventh century that materially assisted the empire's survival against rising Muslim naval power. Its formula remained a zealously protected imperial secret for several centuries, and it was also an element of prestige for the empire and its leadership (Haldon 2006).

(p. 93) However, very damaging to the empire were not only the massive Muslim naval expeditions against Constantinople, but also the frequent smaller-scale Muslim and even self-serving piratic naval raids by

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opportunistic entrepreneurs and strong men against ports and the littoral, and also the numerous vulnerable islands in the Mediterranean and Aegean. These unpredictable maritime raids disrupted trade, travel, and public and private planning. They negatively affected transport, fishing, and island life, and discouraged investment, construction, and island agriculture. Many island-dwellers perished or fell captive and were carried off and sold. Many islands lost much of their human population as well as valuable and essential livestock for consumption or for draught service for agriculture or for porterage. Fortification and establishment of lookouts were imperative but costly for the islands as well as for coastal areas on the Anatolian and European mainland along the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Adriatic Seas (Zuckerman 2005; *contra* Treadgold 1995). Maintenance of control of sea-lanes remained tenuous throughout most of the seventh century.

Imperial Leaders and Succession Crises

Regencies such as that of Martina (641 CE), the controversial second wife and widow of Heraclius, were always moments of great vulnerability for a dynasty and for the stability of government. Given its many enemies, the government and empire could not afford civil wars, but nonetheless they occurred. The most damaging seventh-century civil war occurred at the start of the century (608–10), between Heraclius and the usurping rebel from the Danubian frontier who became Emperor Phocas (Kaegi 1973; Kaegi 2003a). Internal factional and dynastic strife in Byzantium created the opportunity for the great victories of the empire's external foes, whether Persian or Muslim.

Almost all the seventh century's emperors were controversial, embattled, and stormy figures. Perhaps the least controversial one was Constantine IV (669–85), in whose reign the Sixth Ecumenical Council took place, but the documentation for that council and his role in it are far from satisfactory and reliable. He reigned as sole emperor only after the death of Maximus the Confessor, purely by coincidence (Kaegi 2010: 221–3).[6] Some imperial leaders were unstable, if we can trust their portrayal in extant sources, for example, Phocas or Martina, or Justinian II, or the poorly understood Leo, or Leontius, or Philippicus Bardanes (Kaegi 1981: 89–208).

The empire found and developed no major new mineral resources in the seventh century but mostly relied on old, familiar ones, or reopened and recycled mines and mineral deposits. From a strategic perspective, some of the most valuable mines and timber resources disappeared from imperial control in the seventh century in the wake of Slavic (p. 94) and Muslim seizures. A gradual and complex process of transformation of military institutions occurred, accelerated by rapid deterioration of fiscal revenues to support military and political objectives (Haldon 1999: 71–85).

The empire's leaders and authors, whether secular or ecclesiastical, were familiar with an extensive yet ultimately limited range or repertory of historical events and precedents, or so they assumed. The emperor's palace staff had assumed its basic forms and procedures much earlier; likewise court ceremonial, built on what had already taken fundamental shape in the fourth century. The empire inherited an eclectic mix of Roman precedents for ceremonies and imperial dress that had accumulated and continued to grow in a somewhat random fashion over the passage of centuries. That process of accretion of ceremonies continued in the seventh century. Older provincial names and governmental structures had undergone modest modification. A geographic text ascribed to George of Cyprus provides a description of provinces and important towns within provinces from sometime in the early seventh century (Honigmann 1939: 50–77), but sceptics are wary of the ascription and date. Emperors, their predecessors, and advisers had become comfortable, having settled on strategic and internal political decisions firmly and comfortably astride the Bosporus for more than three centuries. They knew the normal range of policy variables and could anticipate most strategic options and eventualities. They were most aware of relatively recent events and their lessons for strategists. They concentrated their attention on a usable past as they understood it, yet theirs was a skewed and very imperfect historical memory. Those experiences, however diverse from the preceding (sixth) century, did not and could not prepare them for the equivalent of a 'black swan', the wholly unexpected, violent, and transformative events and new trends in the seventh century. In the seventh century, change sped up in many political, economic, military, and religious dimensions. A legitimate question is how costly this legacy was from the empire's imperial past, and whether the legacy was a protective coat or an impediment to flexible and creative choices. It is disputable whether the weight of the past was intolerably heavy and contributed to governmental dysfunction.

Seventh-century Byzantines made practical use of extant large-scale buildings and walls from antiquity when such

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structures were available. Large-scale construction of new major building projects was rare in the seventh century because of the lack of disposable funds in the tight competition for scarce financial resources.

Emperors had to pare down their territorial ambitions in the seventh century in the light of events and realities, often reacting to and not initiating events and policies. Many major events were originating outside the reduced borders of the empire. They were often beyond the control of Byzantine emperors and their advisers or their subordinates and subjects.

The emperor's power was not absolute within his empire: strong-willed ecclesiastics, including bishops, holy men, and patriarchs, military officers, and urban crowds could take or influence actions that affected decisions and outcomes.

Disparate outsiders possessed and developed an image of respect for the empire, tempered with a consciousness that its power had diminished in contrast to that of its past, which many only dimly understood. Byzantine leaders made decisions in an (p. 95) apocalyptic age that extended the full stretch of the century, one in which eschatological predictions and pronouncements and fears complicated and sometimes confounded political and military assessments. Apocalypticism was not unique to Byzantium, for it gripped many Muslims, Armenians, and other Christians beyond the borders of the empire (Ps-Methodius, *Apocalypse*; Reinink 1993: vii–xxxvi).

The seventh century witnessed the resumption of an older practice and expected role of emperors: personal military campaigning in the field at the head of Byzantine armies. That decision was a response to extreme military emergencies. It was Heraclius who resumed the practice, which had ceased after Emperor Theodosius I died in 395. However, Heraclius' successors possessed less personal familiarity with other regions of the empire, although it is true that Heraclius' grandson Constans II (641–69) did visit Athens and Rome and Sicily in person (Kaegi 2003a: 166–99).

A different subtle development prevailed: the diminishing participation, contribution, and wisdom of Egyptians and Syrians and northern Mesopotamians and Latin-speakers (from the Balkans, North Africa, and Italy) in Byzantine decision-making and actions, and an increased dependence on Armenians. Those trends affected policy-making, yet Constantinople continued throughout the century to attract young, ambitious, and striving talents from the ends of the Mediterranean and from the hinterland. It had no urban competitor for the ambitious. Whether there was ever a fair or open or perfect competition or match of skills and needs is another matter.

An unquantifiable but real process of simplification reached most corners of the empire and its society. Territorial truncation led to truncation in wealth and power. The empire suffered a reduction of what has been estimated to have been as much as three-quarters of its tax revenues due to territorial losses in tax-rich and grain-rich Egypt and North Africa, as well as losses and destruction in Syria, Anatolia, and Upper Mesopotamia. These changes involved diminishing territory and agricultural returns and human, that is, tax-paying, subjects, military power, diminishing financial resources, and rising military costs for troops, fortifications, weapons, warships and transport ships, mounts, and other animals. These all combined to constrain military choices by the emperor and his planners.

In the face of escalating challenges, the imperial government showed itself to be resilient and flexible. Although it suffered grievous losses of territory, wealth, prestige, population and sacred landscapes, it managed to react, adjust, and endure without destroying itself. Part of its survival was due to official and military decision-makers' self-restraint and limited risk-taking. The explanation for this may simply be prudence or governmental fear of creating still more overextended imbalances that would permit or encourage anti-government military coups.

War and diplomacy and internal military security occupied most of the time and attention of seventh-century emperors, but ecclesiastical controversies and fiscal problems also absorbed their attention. Seventh-century relations between empire and church had a very long and complex history of shifting balances, with no precedent. No new theoretician of such relations emerged in the seventh century.

Shrinkage of territory actually had the positive effect of relieving some pressures, making it less complicated for the empire's strategists to devise military responses to (p. 96) certain external threats to its now reduced frontiers. However, they had now to recognize that military risks were great, that there was no foolproof asylum anywhere, and that no known fortifications or technology could guarantee security.

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Muslim conquests deprived the empire of Syria-Palestine between 634 and 637–38, of Egypt 639–45, and devastated Cyprus in 649 and 653. Muslim blockades of Constantinople occurred possibly by 655, and in 674–78, and Muslims began to undertake winter encampments and raids into Anatolia in 663, having begun virtually annual summer expeditions from Syria into Anatolia, by 644/5. Unlike those earlier campaigns in Syria, Egypt, and Palestine, the raids into Anatolia did not result in permanent occupation and settlement by Muslims (Kaegi 2003b). The empire's leaders assigned priority to defence of Anatolia over its rural possessions and towns in the Balkans, except for those lands that served as a final defence for Constantinople. These Muslim conquests were traumatic and inexplicable to many, while interpreted by some others as a divine warning or punishment.

Officials were not insensitive to contemporary opinion. The imperial government assiduously and aggressively sought to defend the empire's reputation and the reputation of its own emperors of the Heraclian dynasty, in part by finding and condemning convenient scapegoats among its religious and political critics inside the empire. It cast the blame on them for its military reverses on its frontiers. It did not admit any fault on its part, or on the part of the imperial family, in military defeats against external foes in western Asia, Egypt, North Africa, and the Balkans. Political trials had a long history in the Roman Empire. Such accusations and *apologiae* would involve scapegoating Maximus (Brandes 1998).

We do not know all the ways in which the government tried to communicate warnings and explanations of policies to its subjects. Bulletins reported military campaigns and outcomes, but the specific formats and texts of those bulletins have not survived from Constantinople or provincial centres. These were most accessible to the literate subjects in selected spaces, but others would have learned by oral summaries or paraphrases or translations by parish priests or by local officials and town criers or heralds. Others learned by word-of-mouth and these reports might well be very inaccurate.

Officials as well as ecclesiastical leaders and clergy coped with an ageing but not completely obsolete infrastructure that required perpetual maintenance, adjustment, and adaptation, but the available funds, expertise, and readiness to undertake such maintenance were uneven. That helps to explain the irregular official and private responses to crises and to news. Emergency regroupings of military forces and provincial structures already occurred in the sixth century, including under Emperor Justinian I (527–65),[7] but they did not offer any guidelines or great promise for the future. Yet opportunities for positions in government and church administration did attract some young men, including an extraordinarily diverse group of ethnicities and regions.

Older provincial boundaries and nomenclature still survived but gradually atrophied. Experimental combining of civil and military powers in several local cases occurred already in the sixth century. These presumably took place to handle (p. 97) emergencies. By the late 680s groupings of military units had evolved from older army units into Thrakesion, Anatolic, Armeniak, *Obsequium*/*Opsikion* groupings, together with a naval unit of Carabisianoi. These did not replace provinces, but provinces faded, even if traces remained. None of these changes resulted from any sudden military reform by any hero in the guise of a single great military reformer, just as no comprehensive social and economic reform was decreed and combined with military reorganization. Adaptations and recastings of military units and structures did take place in the face of external military pressures and threats, but these lack detailed documentation.

Refugee flows from war fronts, raids, and violent alien occupations of territories challenged the imperial government and government in different regions. Government had to cope with population displacements, which were unsettling, bringing rumours, diseases, terror, unfamiliar customs, suffering, and shortages of food. Refugees fled from the Persians and left their impact on many regions and towns. Refugees required some accommodation but they unsettled many localities. Government and church strove to repatriate them wherever and whenever practicable after the end of hostilities, but outcomes were unpredictable. Flight and rescue occurred but governmental policy did not normally encourage mass flight, deportation, or rescue from threatened localities, with the possible exception of Cyprus in the late seventh century and evacuations from the Tauros and anti-Tauros frontier zones in the late 630s and 640s, which Heraclius reportedly ordered. Some refugees, both elite and ordinary, fled from endangered or overrun provinces to places in a fragmented and very insecure Italy, but there was no optimal place to flee and start a new, secure career with good pay.

Controls of varying effectiveness existed for internal security and to check corruption and pilferage. The emerging *protonotarius* of a military unit reported directly to Constantinople, not through a military chain of command. This

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enabled bureaucrats and the palace in Constantinople to learn of local corruption and problems with security including conspiracies, mutinies, discontent, and other disruptive activities and conditions (Oikonomides 1972).

The empire paid a high price for these shifts. People had to live with ever more imperfect security and heightened risk, and officials implicitly conceded that they could not tightly seal the far-flung borders. Civilians and towns were at risk everywhere. A relatively undisturbed flow of communications and travel by land and sea existed at the start of the century, subject to the ability of travellers to afford the considerable costs, but the tempo and volume of travel slackened from the beginning of the sixth century.

Maximus the Confessor was able to enjoy benefits of the still existent (but soon to diminish or virtually vanish) navigational options on the Mediterranean and the interconnectivity of Mediterranean ports under Byzantine authority. He had to cope with leadership that operated with certain political expectations and reacted defensively to religious critiques and invective by invoking political and military emergencies to justify their actions.

(p. 98) Shared assumptions about government included the expectation, which had existed since at least the early fifth century, that the political and military fortunes of the empire depended on, or were congruent with, the piety and correct theological devotions of the emperor and his circle of chief advisers.

Loss of Egypt, Palestine-Syria, Upper Mesopotamia, and Cyprus to Muslims by 650 did not hermetically seal off or isolate their inhabitants from all contacts with the Byzantine Empire. Information, memoranda, and treatises managed to circulate beyond military borders. Such flows were not perfect but they occurred.

Contingencies and luck sometimes appear to explain the survival or death of individuals and groups. The timing of the revolt of Phocas against Emperor Maurice in late 602 unleashed incalculable future damage to the empire in the form of an unnecessary and destructive war with Persia. The brief interlude of the survival of Phocas' brother Comentiolus II in 610 fatefully delayed Heraclius' consolidation of power after the over-throw of Phocas (Kaegi 1973), and at least another two contingencies affected outcomes: the destructive succession crisis at the death of Heraclius in 641 contributed to the imperial government's failure to organize the defence of Egypt against the Muslims, and the assassination of Constans II in Syracuse, Sicily, in 669 contributed seriously to the paralysis of Byzantine defences of North Africa at a critical moment in 670, effectively allowing Muslims to establish themselves at al-Qayrawan (Kairouan), Tunisia (Kaegi forthcoming).

The seventh century was one of multiple retrenchments for Byzantium, commencing with imperial officials already showing consciousness of limitations on human, financial, and military resources at their disposition for governmental actions. Their difficult and unhappy challenge was to try to do more with less, a hard but necessary adjustment to reduce expenses in order to survive and live within shrinking means. Treasurers, fiscal officials, accountants, and their aides were in demand if they knew how to make budgetary calculations and reductions. Information about financial instructions taught by seventh-century contemporary savant Ananias of Shirak has important implications for understanding the fiscal calculations of the treasurer (*sacellarius*) Philagrius and a census attempted at the end of the reign of Heraclius and during the ensuing succession crisis (Greenwood 2011; Kaegi 2010).

The assassination of Emperor Maurice and the massacre of his family in late 602 and the ensuing domestic strife and imperial succession crisis, which was also a crisis of imperial legitimacy, increased pressures. That assassination set a trend which was to intensify. These internal problems interacted with increased external threats from Avars and Sasanians. There was little routine or equilibrium remaining in the late sixth century, and certainly not in the seventh, in which the empire and its leadership and subjects started to careen from one crisis to the next. Defeating the Sasanians was a major challenge that drained or exhausted more than it absorbed the talent and energies of the empire and no worldly saviour appeared to rescue the empire, in the form of a military hero or a polity or great institutional reformer. The most influential figure to emerge, it turned out, was a prophet among the Muslims, not among the Byzantines. The very survival of the empire and community became an uncertain issue and martyrs such as Anastasius the Persian gained prominence.

(p. 99) War and Military Interventions

War and military calculations dominated officials' attention, with most of the great battles occurring early in the

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century, including the siege of Constantinople in 626, Nineveh in 627, Yarmuk in 636, Sbeitla (North Africa, but some historians may classify this a modest-scale clash not a great battle, even though it was very consequential) in 647/8, the siege/blockade of Constantinople possibly in 655, and in 674–78 (see Map 2 at the end of the chapter). But the empire's leaders generally tried to avoid great decisive battles after suffering disastrous losses at Yarmuk, in order to conserve their remaining limited military manpower (Kaegi 1995).

Religious invocations existed for warfare. Emperors such as Heraclius wished to invoke religious causes to raise morale and zeal in military combat. The emperor, not the church, endeavoured to create religious incentives. It is debatable whether there ever was a Byzantine holy war in any formal sense, an issue that has been the subject of much debate in the last quarter-century (Koder–Stouraitis 2012: 17–26).

Territorial expansion of the empire was out of the question, containment of the empire's external foes being the modest and feasible objective for most of the century.

The empire's political leaders took their inspiration from their past, as they understood it, not from foreign peoples or their cults. Faith in a God-guarded empire and city helped to fix loyalties and contributed to steadiness in difficult times. This was not new, having existed since Constantine I, but familial and religious controversy could and did shake such loyalties. Imperial rhetoric continued to proclaim eternal victory, as in olden days, but military and political realities could impose themselves. The imperial government expected prayers on its behalf for the well-being of the empire, its army, and subjects and was willing to order its generals to intervene if ecclesiastical leaders proved hostile to their regimen.

The outcome by the end of the seventh century was a geographically and demographically diminished empire that was much leaner. Its political, military, and intellectual nerve-centre remained Constantinople and nearby regions. Waterways were essential for its communications and for its projection of power. The empire's geopolitical and 'ideological' pretensions continued to be that of the Byzantine or East Roman Empire as it had existed a century and more earlier. The passage of time and altered political and military realities affected its policies but not necessarily its pretensions.

The government had to cope with controlling and assisting fleeing populations on an unprecedented scale in the Balkans, in Anatolia, in south-west Asia and in the islands, due to wars and to raiding. It was difficult to adjust to living on edge in a permanent state of emergency alert.

Conclusion: Looking Forward

The flow of seventh-century events was shocking and incomprehensible to many, who could not make sense of unprecedented events. The empire's seventh-century historical experiences were not merely recurring ones, not simply repetitions of preceding ones. (p. 100) Biblical and classical frames of reference could not make them very intelligible to anxious contemporary analysts and laity.

The controversial and strong personalities of the Heraclian dynasty, which lasted (intermittently, given a hiatus between 695 and 705) from 608 to 711, left the deepest imprint on the century's imperial history, from the top down. This was a relatively long-lived Byzantine dynasty, but one, like the others, that reached an end. Always unstable, it bore the ultimate responsibility for the fortunes of imperial statecraft, even though much lay beyond its ability to control. No emperor left an autobiography or intimate letters. The reputation of their founder, Heraclius, is inextricably interwoven with gyrating military fortunes, embarrassing familial relations, and well-meaning but unsuccessful ecclesiastical decisions with respect to the selection of important episcopal leaders, to major issues of theology (monoenergism and monotheletism), and to Judaism and incipient Islam. Heraclius suffers from hostile historiography from several frames of reference, yet familial dynastic logic was always fragile in Byzantium. It was not easy to reconcile political and military power and its legal transmission while vestiges of the ancient Roman consulship and memories of some aspects of ancient Rome survived: this was still the Roman Empire and its subjects were called Romans even though some foreigners pejoratively regarded them as Greeks or Greeklings. The Heraclian dynasty managed to perpetuate itself longer than most dynasties at Constantinople (exceptions are the Macedonian and Palaeologan dynasties, in later centuries), but dynastic survival was not the full measure of success for an empire and its prestige. No patriarch, bishop, holy man, or abbot could guarantee perpetual imperial reigns, even though leaders might seek their blessings.

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No radical revolution occurred in seventh-century imperial social and economic structures except truncation, regrouping, and simplification to meet diminished imperial revenues and diminished demographic sources for military recruitment. No major institutional breakthroughs took place.

One must look at the Byzantine Empire in a larger worldwide frame of reference of world empires. Far to the east, by comparison, the contemporary Chinese Tang Dynasty (618–907? CE) managed to gain vast territorial possessions that contained steppe and agricultural lands and agrarian and urban populations that dwarfed the demographic and financial limits of the contemporary Byzantine Empire. Tang China's rich economy, technology, and civilization involved mastery of steppe, horse, camel, and archery. It faced to its north perpetual nomadic challenges not dissimilar to those that confronted Byzantium. Byzantium never came to direct blows with armies of Tang China.

Even in the seventh century Byzantium always managed to maintain special relationships with political entities in western Europe. However, there was no explicit East–West or Asia–Europe consciousness. Byzantium's special relationship with western European polities derived from their common Roman heritage, Christian traditions, and shared commercial and technological and visual cultural relations, but these relationships were far from perfect.

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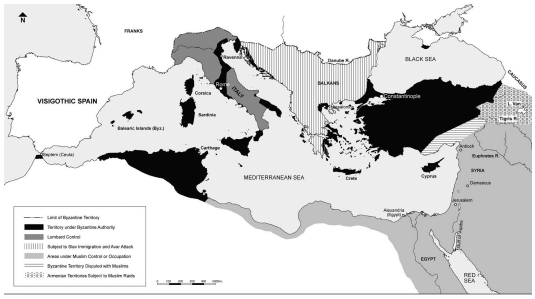

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Map 1 The Byzantine Empire in 630 **CE**, on the eve of the Islamic conquests.

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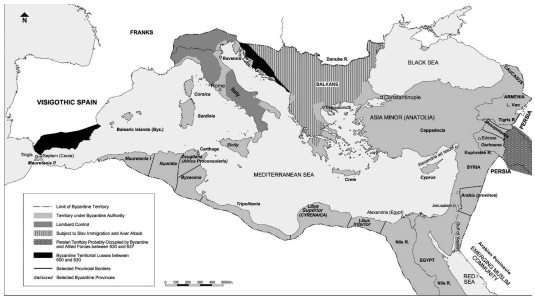

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Map 2 The Byzantine Empire *c.*645, soon after the decease of Heraclius.

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Notes:

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Notes:

([1]) Haldon 1997: 208–53; Whitby 2000: 292–5, 306–14; Whitby 1995.

([2]) Bees 1909; Demetrius: Lemerle 1979: 106–8, 109–12, 124–9; Whitby 1995: 66.

([3]) *Vita Theodori Syceotae,* 119, 127, Festugière 1970: 95–6, 102–3; *Vita Anastasii Persiaci*, Flusin 1992; Leontius of Neapolis, *Vita Johannis Cyprensis*, Festugière–Ryden 1974: 255–626.

([4]) Grierson 1968: 101, 106, 270–4; Grierson 1970: 391–4, 396–8.

([5]) *Doctrina Jacobi* 5. 16, 5. 20, Dagron–Déroche 2010: 209–11, 214–19; *Vita Theodori Syceotae* 152, Festugière–1974: 121–2.

([6]) Howard-Johnston (2010: 262–3, 492–5) is very conjectural.

([7]) Stein 1959: 281–2, 466–7; Jones 1964: 282–95, 466–77, 482–3.

Walter Kaegi

Walter E. Kaegi is professor of history and a permanent voting member of the Oriental Institute of The University of Chicago.

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Maximus, a Cautious Neo-Chalcedonian

Cyril Hovorun

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Abstract and Keywords

A major context which is important for understanding Maximus' work was neo-Chalcedonianism. Neo-Chalcedonianism was a mixed political–theological project initiated by Emperor Justinian a century before Maximus. It aimed to reconcile the adversaries to the Council of Chalcedon with the followers of the council, for both ecclesial and political reasons, namely the unity of church and empire. The same expediencies remained urgent in the time of Maximus, for his contemporary Emperor Heraclius. There is a consensus among scholars of Maximus that he was a neo-Chalcedonian. Indeed, he used neo-Chalcedonian theological language and had his christological interests largely focused on the neo-Chalcedonian problematics. At the same time, neo-Chalcedonianism was not only inspirational for him, but also forced him to react and to polemicize. The conclusion of this chapter is that Maximus was a cautious neo-Chalcedonian.

Keywords: Maximus, Emperor Heraclius, neo-Chalcedonianism, Council of Chalcedon, church unity, Emperor Justinian, imperial unity

WHEN Joseph Lebon identified a group of theologians of the fifth and sixth centuries whom he called 'néo-chalcédoniens' (Lebon 1909: 409, 411–12, 521–2), he did not realize how important his discovery would become for the understanding of the Christian East in the centuries that followed the Council of Chalcedon (451). His discovery became a key that helps us to understand theological developments until the eighth century at least. For instance, modern scholarship regards the Fifth (553) and Sixth (680–81) Ecumenical Councils, as well as authors like John of Damascus, as 'neo-Chalcedonian'. The notion of 'neo-Chalcedonianism' also sheds light on the development of church–state relations in the Eastern Roman Empire, because in most cases it functioned as a political project. A central figure in the evolution of late neo-Chalcedonianism was Maximus the Confessor. He influenced neo-Chalcedonianism, and neo-Chalcedonianism influenced him. This notion provides a system of coordinates that determines with precision the location of Maximus on the theological map of his epoch.

Neo-Chalcedonianism—A Creative Misconception?

In a sense, the term 'neo-Chalcedonianism' is misleading. The neo-Chalcedonian theologians did not identify themselves as such. It would have been a blasphemy for them, because the prefix *neo-* would imply revision of Chalcedon. They were faithful to the spirit and the letter of the council, identifying themselves simultaneously as 'Chalcedonians' and 'Cyrillians'. This double identity is the key to understanding what was neo-Chalcedonianism. It was a synthesis of two theological languages: the one of the Council of Chalcedon, and the other of Cyril of Alexandria. Theological language (p. 107) of Chalcedon was itself synthetic, combining two elements: Cyril's semantics of unity of Christ and the lexeme 'two natures', promoted particularly by western theologians and reflected in the *Tome* of Pope Leo. Therefore, neo-Chalcedonianism was a synthesis of the syntheses, with Cyril's theological language at its core. It can be also seen as a tendency to re-focus on the theology of Cyril. For this reason, some scholars prefer to call it 'Cyrilline Chalcedonianism' (Meyendorff 1989: 337) or 'neo-Cyrillianism'

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(Grillmeier ii.ii: 434 n.481).

The neo-Chalcedonian theologians developed their synthesis in contrast to the other faction of the followers of Cyril, those who did not accept Chalcedon, of whom the theological master was Severus of Antioch. Both neo-Chalcedonians and Severans were ardent followers of Cyril and insisted on their own interpretations of the theology of their common teacher. The former interpreted Cyril as compatible with the two-natures language of Chalcedon, while the latter believed that Cyril and Chalcedon were incompatible, because it is impossible to speak simultaneously of one and two natures in Christ. The controversy between the two factions was essentially hermeneutical. The neo-Chalcedonians applied more theological imagination to prove that two and one are the same. The anti-Chalcedonians followed a more straightforward logic: two cannot be one. Each group wanted Cyril to be on its side and interpreted him accordingly.

Joseph Lebon identified the shift from confrontation between the two languages to their synthesis as a commonality of the neo-Chalcedonian theologians: Leontius of Byzantium, John Grammaticus, and John of Scythopolis. According to Lebon, the neo-Chalcedonian theologians updated Chalcedonian theology by including in it the entire terminological apparatus of Cyril and by applying to it the categories of Aristotelian dialectics.

The next generation of the scholars after Lebon carried his idea of neo-Chalcedonianism further. In the breakthrough volume dedicated to the 1500th anniversary of Chalcedon, Charles Moeller published a lengthy update of Lebon's concept (Moeller 1951). He argued that neo-Chalcedonianism emerged as an outcome of nascent Byzantine scholasticism, and considered the neo-Chalcedonian synthesis to be a product of the reconciliation of the Alexandrian and the Antiochene theological approaches. It thus combined the Logos-based unitarian and the human-concerned binitarian Christologies. Moeller expanded the list of the neo-Chalcedonian theologians by adding to it Heraclianus of Chalcedon, Macedonius of Constantinople, Theodore of Raithu, and others. He considered as the first neo-Chalcedonian the monk Nephalius (see Moeller 1944). Moeller identified three groups of neo-Chalcedonian theologians: the first balanced the Alexandrian and the Antiochene Christologies and included John Grammaticus and Ephrem of Antioch; the second inclined more to Alexandrian christological monism, and its main representatives, according to Moeller, were Leontius of Jerusalem, Theodore of Raithu, and John of Scythopolis; the third group included more radicalChalcedonians, Leontius of Byzantium and the leader of the 'Scythian' monks, John Maxentius.

In 1962, Siegfried Helmer dated the inception of the movement to be soon after the *Henotikon* of Zeno (482) (Helmer 1962). Among the first representatives of the (p. 108) movement he considered the monk Nephalius, John Grammaticus, and John of Scythopolis, in that they attempted a reconciliation of the Alexandrian and Antiochene Christologies. The key notions of the neo-Chalcedonian vocabulary, for Helmer, became 'hypostatic unity', 'composed hypostasis', and '*unus ex Trinitate passus*' ('one of the Trinity suffered'). At the next stage, neo-Chalcedonianism was promoted as a large-scale project of reconciliation with the non-Chalcedonian groups. The key figure of the movement at this stage was Justinian. Other members of this group were Ephrem of Amida and Leontius of Jerusalem. After the Fifth Ecumenical Council of 553, according to Helmer, neo-Chalcedonianism became the official orthodoxy of the Eastern Roman Empire. It gradually lost its dynamic of creative development and repeated itself, as can be seen in the works of Anastasius of Antioch, Theodore of Raithu, and Eulogius of Alexandria.

The conclusions of Lebon, Moeller, and Helmer were revised by Marcel Richard (Richard 1977). He suggested considering neo-Chalcedonianism as prevenient to Chalcedonianism, and the latter as the first stage of the former. According to this scholar, neo-Chalcedonian Christology was more inclusive than Chalcedonianism because it allowed both one-nature and two-natures formulae before Chalcedon. At its core was Cyril of Alexandria with his formula 'one nature of the incarnate God Word'. Richard regarded Flavian of Constantinople as an example of a neo-Chalcedonian before Chalcedon. The Council of Chalcedon and its apologists later reduced the original terminological spectrum and excluded from it the language of one nature. The neo-Chalcedonians did not therefore produce a new synthesis after Chalcedon but rather came back to the original usage of the christological terms. Along with the uncensored language of Cyril, they embraced the formulae of Chalcedon. Richard added to the neo-Chalcedonian list the emperor Justinian and the rest of the Scythian monks from the group of John Maxentius.

Alois Grillmeier half-jokingly called neo-Chalcedonianism a *nouvelle théologie* of the post-Chalcedonian period, referring to the famous theological movement of renewal within the Catholic Church that led to Vatican II (Grillmeier

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ii.ii: 24). He distinguished two types: one in the 'extreme or integral sense' and the other moderate. He assigned to the former those theologians who believed that both two-nature and one-nature languages were equally applicable to Christ. One language should be used against the Eutychians, and the other against the Nestorians. The moderate neo-Chalcedonians regarded the language of two natures as compulsory, while the one-nature language was supplementary. Both groups, nevertheless, were faithful to Chalcedon and accepted the entire terminological apparatus of Cyril. Grillmeier identified one of the earliest attempts at the neo-Chalcedonian synthesis as the compilation of the *florilegium Cyrillianum* (around 482; see Hespel 1955), a collection of quotations from Cyril to prove his compatibility with Chalcedon.

For Patrick Gray, a dramatic multiplication of *florilegia* with quotations from Cyril at the end of the fifth to the beginning of the sixth century also meant a change in the christological paradigm, which shifted to neo-Chalcedonianism. An increased number of references to Cyril and other authoritative authors was meant to demonstrate (p. 109) faithfulness to Cyrillian theology. The two antagonistic factions, the neo-Chalcedonians and the Severans, tried to prove through their collections of quotations that they were more conservative in interpreting Cyril. Unlike Grillmeier, who compared the neo-Chalcedonians to the liberal activists of *la nouvelle théologie* in the twentieth century, Gray defined them as 'conservative Cyrillians who accepted Chalcedon' (Gray 1982: 62). The controversy between the two groups was essentially about whose hermeneutics were truer to Cyril.

In my opinion, the following phases of neo-Chalcedonianism can be distinguished:

1. Preliminary neo-Chalcedonianism. At this stage, it was an initiative of a small group of theologians including Nephalius and the Scythian monks. They tried to synthesize a theological language which would be inclusive of Cyril and Chalcedon.
2. 'Justinianic neo-Chalcedonianism' became a large-scale enterprise sponsored by the state. At this stage, neo-Chalcedonianism turned into a politico-ecumenical project and the 'theopaschite' formula *unus ex Trinitate passus* became one of its *foci*.
3. 'Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism' was a continuation of 'Justinianic neo-Chalcedonianism' in its theological and political dimensions, designed under the emperor Heraclius. The issue of the activities of Christ and the Ps-Dionysian formula, 'new theandric activity' of Christ, was placed at its centre. This sort of neo-Chalcedonianism at its initial stage was monoenergist, that is, supporting the idea of single activity (ἐνέργεια) of Christ. When the project of reconciling with the anti-Chalcedonian Christians on the basis of the single-activity formula failed, 'monoenergist neo-Chalcedonianism' was updated to 'monothelite neo-Chalcedonianism', since the notion of a single will of Christ replaced the notion of a single activity. At its later stage, 'Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism' became monothelite.
4. 'Maximian neo-Chalcedonianism' confronted 'Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism' in its two variations, although it retained the core of the initial 'Justinianic neo-Chalcedonianism'. Maximus revised neo-Chalcedonianism significantly, and it was eventually accepted by the church in this revised form. 'Maximian neo-Chalcedonianism' became the foundation for the Sixth Ecumenical Council and theologians like Anastasius of Sinai and John of Damascus.

Justinianic Neo-Chalcedonianism

The neo-Chalcedonian synthesis was more linguistic and hermeneutical than theological and systematic. It emerged on the margins of post-Chalcedonian theology. At some stage, however, politicians paid attention to it and made it a political project, enhancing (p. 110) it and promoting it to the official doctrine of the state. Neo-Chalcedonianism owes its prominence primarily to the emperor Justinian, who, however, did not immediately realize the political value of this method. Illustrative in this regard is the 'theopaschite' story (Grillmeier ii.ii: 320–6), which is as follows.

A group of Latin-speaking monks from the region between the mouth of the Danube and the Black Sea came to Constantinople in 518 with their own project of reconciliation between the followers and adversaries of Chalcedon. The idea of the Scythian monks was to identify formulae of theological convergence that would satisfy both parties, and then to build unity on the basis of these formulae. Each side could interpret these formulae in its own way, but would have to agree on the formulae proper. This invention was based on a belief in the power of formulae to effect unity, a belief that became particularly strong in the sixth century with the emergence of Byzantine scholasticism.

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The formula that the Scythian monks suggested was '*unus ex Trinitate passus* (and/or *mortuus, crucifixus*) *est*'. The Severans had endorsed this formula as stressing the unity of Christ: if Christ is one and not divided into two natures, he is the same who is God and who suffers. The Chalcedonians also accepted the formula. In 520, for example, the dyophysite monks and clergymen from Jerusalem, Antioch, and Syria Secunda used it in their letter to the emperor Justin. The major Chalcedonian authority who is believed to have used it was the patriarch of Constantinople, Proclus (434–*c.*446).

When the monks presented their project to the court in Constantinople, the first reaction was sceptical. The project was rejected by Justinian, who at that time was a close advisor to his uncle, Emperor Justin. When the monks decided to present their project to Rome, Justinian wrote to Pope Hormisdas suggesting that the pope receive the monks, listen to them, and then send these 'restless people' far away, because they were introducing novelties. This letter was dated 29 June 519. In a few days, however, Justinian suddenly sent another letter to the pope. Now he insistently asked him to satisfy the inquiry of the 'pious monks' as quickly as possible and to send them back to Constantinople. He wrote that a positive reaction from the pope would be crucial for the unity of the church. Justinian was so passionate about obtaining the pope's approval that he sent four more letters during the next year, pressuring Rome to accept the 'theopaschite' formula. In order to dissipate the fear of Rome that the formula *unus ex Trinitate passus* implied sufferings of the Godhead of Christ, he interpreted *unus* as *persona* and added that Christ suffered in the flesh. Despite all these efforts, the response of Rome to the requests of Justinian was not affirmative.

In this story, Justinian suddenly changed from sceptic to ardent promoter of the 'theopaschite' formula. This happened when he realized that its potential reached beyond theology. He saw that this formula was capable of bridging the divided Christian groups of the empire. For both groups, it respected their traditions, even though these groups understood it differently. Importantly, this formula did not contradict Chalcedon and cohered with the theology of Cyril, who understood Christ 'suffering in flesh from the Jews and remaining passionless according to the Godhead' (*In Psal.*, PG 69. 1148. 40–41). The 'theopaschite' formula can be regarded as neo-Chalcedonian, and it became the first neo-Chalcedonian formula employed for political purposes.

(p. 111) The ultimate political purpose of all Roman emperors, including Christian ones, was to sustain the unity of the empire, and to keep its people consolidated in the face of numerous invasions. The unity of the empire was threatened when some parts of the population wanted to collaborate with the invaders, which often happened on the grounds of theological differences. Parts of the Roman population that did not accept the doctrine promulgated by Constantinople wanted to dissent. Theological disagreements, therefore, constituted a direct threat to the integrity of the state. Apart from this practical rationale, the Byzantines believed in a mystical connection between the unity of the empire and conformity of the *cultus*, a connection that went back to pre-Constantinian times (Brent 1999: 2–3). Unity of doctrine and of the church became an essential part of the political ideology of Byzantium (Meyendorff 1989).

Matters of dogma, therefore, were both theological and political. Discussions about the articles of faith had to be conducted under the supervision of the state. The state facilitated meetings of the theologians and the bishops and lent weight to their decisions. However, when they caused divisions, the state could intervene and correct the decisions to its own benefit. The 'theopaschite formula' and neo-Chalcedonian initiatives perfectly fitted the interests of the state. Justinian saw it in the summer of 519, a few days after he dismissed the Scythian monks. He therefore had to change his mind, and he made neo-Chalcedonianism a political instrument of restoration of the empire's integrity. Neo-Chalcedonianism also became a state-sponsored ecumenical project. From a topic interesting to a narrow circle of theologians it developed into an empire-wide enterprise that affected the entire church, and influenced the policies of church and state. The emperor convened 'dialogues' in his palace, where he brought together antagonistic parties, as happened, for instance, in 532. He favoured and introduced to his court theologians who promoted neo-Chalcedonianism, while endorsing their theology with legislation and ordering neo-Chalcedonian hymns to be sung in the churches, like the famous 'Only-begotten Son and Word of God'.

The most important state-sponsored event in the promotional campaign of neo-Chalcedonianism was the Fifth Ecumenical Council convened in Constantinople in 553. It condemned the 'Three Chapters', with their insinuations against Cyril of Alexandria, and thus brought him back to the centre of christological orthodoxy. The council legitimized the usage of the Cyrillian formula 'one nature incarnated', and of the theopaschite formula. The council's agenda was largely shaped by Justinian. Remarkably, the council's condemnation of the 'Three Chapters'

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repeated the edict which Justinian had promulgated in 551. It also supported the 'theopaschite' project, which Justinian had initiated more than thirty years earlier.

Justinian modified the initial idea of neo-Chalcedonianism by making it a politico-ecumenical project. The categorical imperative of this project was unity of the church and of the empire. While peoples in different parts of the empire—Syria, Egypt, Carthage, and Rome—were allowed to keep their theological traditions, at the same time they were asked to accept common theological formulae. Neo-Chalcedonianism was about preserving the unity of the diverse theological traditions through common formulae, given that it was built on the belief that theological formulae had the power (p. 112) to unite factions, even if those factions interpreted them differently. These formulae had to be rooted in the traditions which were to be brought to unity. Ideally, they had to be endorsed by Cyril and Chalcedon but, if not, the neo-Chalcedonian formulae were required not to contradict either of these authorities.

Heraclean Neo-Chalcedonianism

Almost a century after Justinian reshaped neo-Chalcedonianism and made it a politico-ecumenical project, Emperor Heraclius employed it for his own purposes. He modified the original Justinianic neo-Chalcedonianism, though its methodology remained the same: the employment of theological formulae that would satisfy all antagonistic factions. These formulae had to be traditional for the factions, and at least implied, if not articulated directly, by both Cyril and the Council of Chalcedon. In addition, the traditional character of the formulae had to be proven by *florilegia* and confirmed by a council. Heraclius chose for such a formula of union the concept of one activity (ἐνέργεια) of Christ. Later, it was replaced with the formula of one will of Christ. These formulae were supported by *florilegia*, which subsequently were proven to be forged. Heraclius did not manage to convene a council to support these formulae, but instead employed the institute of the pentarchy, five patriarchs who subscribed to his version of neo-Chalcedonianism. The biggest difference, however, between Heraclius and Justinian was that Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism failed when it was rejected by the church at the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Maximus made a major contribution to this rejection.

Heraclius was forced to employ neo-Chalcedonianism by the conditions of the empire that he inherited. When he ascended the imperial throne in 610, the economy of the state was in deep recession, society divided by the civil war, and the Persian shah, Khosrau II, had just launched an invasion (Kaegi 2003). In the period from 609 to 612, the Persians broke the Byzantine defence in Caucasus, captured Armenia, and invaded Cappadocia. They advanced on the Mesopotamian front and passed to the Anatolian plateau. From 613 to 614, the Persians invaded Syria, Palestine, and Egypt and captured Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem, from where they took the cross of Christ. From 615 to 616, they reached the walls of Constantinople, and in 619 captured Alexandria. Khosrau was given a real chance to destroy his rival. Other enemies of Constantinople grasped the opportunity and opened their fronts against Heraclius when the Avars, accompanied by the Slavs, invaded Illyricum, and in 615 the Visigothic king, Sisebut, occupied several important Roman cities in Hispania. The Roman Empire faced a threat that it had not experienced for a long time.

The Persian advance into Byzantine territory was facilitated by the people who did not accept the Council of Chalcedon. These people had developed their own distinctive theological and liturgical traditions and supported their own hierarchy, which was not (p. 113) in unity with Constantinople. The Persians gave them the opportunity to also have their own political identity. Khosrau granted privileges to the Jacobite church in regional areas where it constituted a majority. This encouraged the Byzantine anti-Chalcedonians to favour the Persian invasion. In the words of the Severan patriarch of Antioch, Athanasius the Camel-Driver (595–631): 'the world rejoiced in peace and love', because with the coming of the Persians the 'Chalcedonian night' had passed away (Severus of Asmounein, *History*, 481). Heraclius, who personally commanded his troops in the East, observed the vulnerability of the non-Chalcedonian population there. This forced him to take extraordinary measures towards reconciliation with the anti-Chalcedonians. After recapturing the occupied eastern territories in 624–28, he started the realization of this task.

In this, Heraclius relied on the expertise of the patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius (610–38). Sergius was one of the closest confidants of the emperor and made a crucial contribution to his neo-Chalcedonian undertaking. Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism was also Sergian. Sergius suggested that Heraclius place at the core of his

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ecumenical project the issue of the activities of Christ, a further development of 'Justinianic theopaschism'. If there is one who is God and who suffers, then, as Sergius concluded, he had one activity. This conclusion did not contradict Chalcedon, so Sergius believed, and was coherent with Cyril of Alexandria who spoke of one 'congenital activity' (συγγενής ἐνέργεια) in Christ. Cyril used this phrase in his explanation of John's story of Christ raising from the dead the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue (*In Ioan.*, PG 73. 577C–D).

The concept of a single activity of Christ was an essential part of the Severan tradition. Severus and his followers emphasized the oneness of the activity of Christ even more than the oneness of his nature. The spiritual leader of the anti-Chalcedonian group in Alexandria, Patriarch Theodosius (535–66), made belief in the single activity of Christ an important part of the identity of his flock. The Chalcedonians, Sergius believed, would also accept the single activity of Christ on the grounds, for instance, that Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite wrote of 'a new theandric activity of Christ' (*Ep. ad Gaium*, Heil-Ritter 1991: 161). Sergius found an additional argument for the Chalcedonians to support the idea of single activity in the *libellus* allegedly sent by the patriarch of Constantinople, Menas (536–52), to Pope Vigilius (537–55). This document, which survives only in two Syriac fragments, became a major testimony in support of the one activity of Christ for the Chalcedonians.

Having identified the issue of the activity of Christ as a potential point of convergence between the pro- and anti-Chalcedonians, Heraclius and Sergius started probing the ground in both camps, to ascertain how this idea would be accepted. In the Chalcedonian camp, they consulted Theodore, bishop of Pharan on the peninsula of Sinai. According to Maximus, Sergius sent Theodore a letter asking him to present his opinion concerning the single ἐνέργεια and will in Christ, and attached to the letter a *libellus* of Menas. Theodore reportedly approved the idea. Sergius also consulted the camp of the Severans, his correspondents there being Sergius Macaronas, bishop of Arsenoë (in Egypt), and George Arsas.

(p. 114) From the elements of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian traditions, Sergius compiled a doctrine based on the language of the two natures, which he believed would facilitate *rapprochement* between them. On this basis Sergius built the concept of a single activity of Christ, without, however, explaining how the latter could stem from the former. The two pieces of the doctrine looked as if they had been placed together mechanically. Sergius did not insist that the doctrine of a single activity was the only possible orthodox interpretation of the issue of Christ's activities. For him, it was one of several possible interpretations of this issue, which was left unexplained by Cyril, Chalcedon, and other theological authorities. The monoenergist doctrine was thus promoted as eclectic, relative, and hermeneutical.

Sergius was not its only author since, in drawing it up, he was assisted by Cyrus, bishop of Phasis in Lazica. After having accepted the idea of a single activity in Christ, Cyrus was promoted to the see of Alexandria in *c.*630 with the purpose of implementing it there. In Alexandria, Cyrus composed a text known as 'the Nine Chapters', which became one of the most important documents of Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism. On the basis of this document, the Chalcedonians and the non-Chalcedonians of Alexandria signed a formula of union on 3 June 633. Justinianic neo-Chalcedonianism constituted the basis of the document and Cyrus used primarily Cyrillian language: 'one incarnate nature of the Word', a single Christ 'contemplated in' (ACO II.ii.ii. 598. 12) and coming 'from two natures' (ACO II.ii.ii. 598. 5–6). The 'theopaschite' formula was particularly stressed in the document:

> If someone, in saying that our one Lord, Jesus Christ, is discerned in two natures, does not confess that the same is one of the holy Trinity, God the Word begotten eternally from the Father, that in the last times of the age the same became incarnate … but knows him to be this one and another (ἕτερος καὶ ἕτερος) and not as one and the same (ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν), according to the most wise Cyril, the same being perfect in Godhead and perfect in humanity, and in that respect and that alone discerned in two natures, the same one suffering and not suffering in two distinct respects, as the same Cyril [now] among the saints, said, suffering in human fashion in the flesh as a human being, but remaining impassible as God amidst the sufferings of his own flesh, and that one and the same Christ and Son performed things befitting God and things human by one theandric activity … let him be anathema.
>
> (ACO II.ii.ii. 598. 12–21; trans. Allen 2009: 171, 173)

From Christ as a single subject of all actions the document passed to stating a single activity, with reference to Ps-Dionysius' formula of 'new theandric activity': who does not believe 'that this one and the same Christ and Son worked both the divine and the human by one theandric ἐνέργεια, as St Dionysius teaches … let him be anathema'

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(ACO II.ii.ii. 598. 18–22).

The formula 'theandric activity' became an essential part of Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism. It was accepted by both anti- and pro-Chalcedonians, though they interpreted it differently. Severus, for instance, wrote that he could not interpret the formula of Ps-Dionysius otherwise than in the sense of single activity (*Doctrina Patrum* (p. 115) 309. 17–22). From the Chalcedonian camp, John of Scythopolis, the early editor of the works of Ps-Dionysius, wrote in his scholia about a 'compound' or 'mixed' activity of the Godhead and the manhood in Christ. John clearly distinguished between the two activities:

> Something new: Let no one foolishly say that he calls the Lord Jesus θεανδρίτης. For he did not speak of a 'theandrite' (θεανδριτική) activity [sc. the adjectival derivative of ὁ θεανδρίτης] but of a theandric (θεανδρική) activity, in some sense a compound activity of God and man. Whence he also speaks of God as 'humanized', which is to say, God who had become a human being. He called this mixed activity alone a 'theandric' (θεανδρική) [activity]. For he acted as God alone when he, although absent, healed the centurion's child; but as human alone although he was God, in his eating and passion. He accomplished other miracles as a mixture, as when he healed the blind through an anointing and stopped a flow of blood by his touch.
>
> (Rorem 1998: 253)

Owing to John, Ps-Dionysius, who had an apparent inclination towards one-nature Christology, was 'Chalcedonized'. A dyenergist interpretation of his lexeme 'theandric activity' became normative. Therefore, after the Nine Chapters were published, their opponents could not accept the monoenergist interpretation of this phrase. They accused the author of the chapters of altering the initial Dionysian text, which reads '*a new* theandric activity' and not '*one* theandric activity'. They insisted that the phrase 'a new theandric activity' did not mean one activity, but a synthesis of two activities. Maximus was a chief promoter of such an interpretation.

Maximian Neo-Chalcedonianism

Maximus, however, was not the first to reject the monoenergist interpretation of Ps-Dionysius and thus to doubt the Heraclean update of neo-Chalcedonianism. Earlier, Sophronius, the future patriarch of Jerusalem, distinguished on the basis of the Ps-Dionysian formula three kinds of activity in Christ: divine, human, and 'theandric'. He placed the latter between the two former ones. In his interpretation, the theandric activity was not a single activity, but a composition of two different activities: 'We speak also about a new and so-called theandric activity of this power, which is not one, but has different origins and various [components]' (ACO II.ii.i. 456. 13–15). This line was continued at the Lateran Council in 649, which followed a script drawn up by Maximus and his confederates (Riedinger 1985). The Lateran's statements therefore should be considered as reflecting the views of Maximus. According to the acts of the council, Pope Martin (649–53) interpreted the Ps-Dionysian formula as implying not a single activity, but two activities, which are united in the same way as the natures of Christ: 'The holy Dionysius did not wish to profess a single activity, as they say, but a dual activity of the one who is dual in nature, and so he used a composite expression' (ACO II.i. (p. 116) 148. 29–149. 32). This interpretation was an extrapolation to Ps-Dionysius of the classical neo-Chalcedonian understanding of Cyril's one-nature language. As Cyril, when he said 'one nature' meant two natures in unity, so Ps-Dionysius in effect implied two distinct activities of Christ. Pope Martin, according to the acts of the Lateran, explained why Dionysius spoke of this double activity as a single one: because he implied the *communicatio idiomatum* and the unity of the natures of Christ in his hypostasis. In contrast to Sophronius, Martin did not speak about purely divine or human activities. All activities of Christ were theandric and retained features of both natures:

> Therefore, he [sc. Ps-Dionysius] wisely said that [Christ] performed neither divine [actions] according to the Godhead, nor human [actions] according to man, in such a way declaring to us a complete unity—[the unity] of both the natures and his activities, according to the nature—because it is a property of this consummate unity that the same [Christ] acts supernaturally in the both ways, according to the exchange, that is, the divine [actions] humanly, and the human [actions] divinely. He does not perform the divine [actions] by divinity alone, nor does he perform the human [actions] by the mere humanity, but, on the one hand, he performs miracles in an unusual manner through the flesh, which was endowed with the intellectual soul and united to him according to the hypostasis; on the other hand, he deliberately

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> accepted, through his almighty power, the trial of his life-giving sufferings, for our sake. In such a way, he revealed the above unity and presented the difference; the unity he revealed by the putting together of the proper activities, by exchange, and the difference—through preserving the natural property.
>
> (ACO II.ii.i. 148. 32–151. 5)

Maximus obviously stood behind this interpretation of the Ps-Dionysian formula by the Lateran Council and paid much attention to the dyenergist interpretation of this formula in his own works as well. In his fifth *Ambiguum* he wrote, for instance, that the Ps-Dionysian 'new theandric activity' in effect does not imply a single activity, but unity of the two activities (*Amb.Io.* 5, PG 91. 1056A–1060C). To him, the Ps-Dionysian formula signified that the activities become known in and through each other (*Opusc.* 8, PG 91. 100D). In this way, Ps-Dionysius denoted the ineffable mode of disclosure of the two activities (*DP*, PG 91. 345C–348C; *Opusc.* 8, PG 91. 100B–101A).

In the same sense Maximus interpreted the passage from Cyril of Alexandria, where he uses the expression 'one congenital activity' (*In Ioan.*, PG 73. 577C–D). According to Maximus, Cyril's 'single activity' (ἐνέργεια) was neither hypostatic, nor natural, but indicated the unity of the Logos and the flesh in Christ, as well as a mutual coming together (συμφυΐα) and reciprocity (περιχώρησις) of the two activities (*Opusc.* 7, PG 91. 88A).

Maximus regarded Cyril of Alexandria as the highest christological authority and accepted his entire theological language. In this regard, he was a faithful neo-Chalcedonian. Indicative of the position of Maximus concerning Cyril are the acts of the Lateran Council, which reflect Maximus' personal theological positions. These acts quoted Cyril sixty-six times, while also severely rebuking those who had reservations about his terminology. For instance, the fifth *anathema* of the Lateran Council stated: 'If someone according to the holy Fathers does not truly confess the one incarnate (p. 117) nature of God the Word, where "incarnate" means our essence, which exists in Christ God completely and without omission, excepting only sin, let him be condemned' (ACO II.ii.i. 372. 1–8).

Maximus extrapolated from traditional neo-Chalcedonian formulae to the issue of activities. Thus, for him, as both one-nature and two-nature languages are applicable to Christ, so the expressions 'single-activity' and 'two-activities' can be legitimately applied to the activities of Christ. They describe different aspects of the same reality, the former indicating the unity of Christ, the latter, the diversity (see *Opusc.* 7, PG 90. 88B–89D). Lack of either of them would lead to a distortion of the true picture of Christ: 'He who does not accept equally and appropriately both (sc. monistic and dualistic expressions) by applying the former to the union, and the latter to the natural difference, falls inevitably, as is normal, into either division or confusion' (*Opusc.* 8, PG 90. 105A).

In dealing with Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism, Maximus produced his own neo-Chalcedonian approach, not only to the issue of the activities of Christ, but also to the wills of Christ. The issue of the will brought both Heraclean and Maximian neo-Chalcedonianism to a new level. Heraclius in the last years of his life attempted to update the neo-Chalcedonian project by reconstructing it on the basis of the issue of Christ's will. He was forced to do so by historical circumstances, which have been treated in detail in this volume by Kaegi, and are reprised briefly here.

Neo-Chalcedonian Treatment of Wills

A year after the union of Alexandria was signed, the Arabs invaded Byzantium and started their swift advance into its heartlands. In 636, the Romans were destroyed at Yarmūk and had to abandon Syria. The Arab troops rushed to Upper Mesopotamia. In late 639, the Arabs invaded Egypt and in 641 conquered it. New threats to the unity of the empire forced Heraclius to enhance his neo-Chalcedonian project. This project, with the issue of Christ's activities in its centre, did not seem to have worked as expected. It eventually attracted a small number of the non-Chalcedonians and caused divisions within the Chalcedonian camp. Instead of abandoning the project altogether, however, Heraclius decided to update it. In the place of the single activity he chose to promote the single will in Christ. In 638, he issued an *Ekthesis*, a document of the imperial chancellery that had the character of an obligatory law. This document prohibited all debates on the issue of the activities in Christ and confessed instead 'one will of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God' (ACO II.ii.i. 160. 14–29). With the *Ekthesis*, Heraclean neo-Chalcedonianism passed into a second phase, a monothelite one. It was supposed to function in the same way as monoenergist or Justinianic neo-Chalcedonianism did. There was a formula that had to be accepted by both antagonistic factions. They could interpret it each in their own way, but had to restore communion on the basis of this formula. This time, the category of will was chosen as the core of the new neo-Chalcedonian formula.

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(p. 118) Unlike the category of activity, the category of will (θέλημα or θέλησις) was not a traditional one. It was hardly distinguishable as a self-standing category in the world of antiquity and early Christianity (see Dihle 1982). Neither the adversaries nor the supporters of Chalcedon discussed the issue of the wills of Christ. Since Cyril did not use the word 'will' in a christological context, this was a brand new christological category free of any previous connotations. This meant that the designers of the update to neo-Chalcedonianism decided to change their method. Instead of playing with complex and often incompatible hermeneutical traditions that had been shaped around traditional categories, such as 'activity', they chose to impose hermeneutics-free formulae, which did not have to be interpreted, but accepted as they were. This signified a dramatic shift in the neo-Chalcedonian paradigm. It was no longer hermeneutical, at least not to the extent that it used to be. It also did not engage directly the terminology of Cyril and of Chalcedon. It remained, however, eclectic, with the doctrine of one will of Christ artificially attached to the doctrine of two natures.

Although Cyril of Alexandria did not explore the christological meaning of the category of will, the monothelites engaged some Cyrillian terminology. In particular, they employed the expression 'flesh endowed with a soul' (ἐψυχωμένη σάρξ).[1] They preferred this expression because it seemed to exclude will from the human nature of Christ, and consolidated a concept of will as single, entirely divine, and lacking any human element. They did not consider the will as a mixture or a composition of divine and human elements, as they did in application to the single activity. They never called the will'theandric' because, for them, it remained plain and unmixed. The divine will enriched the human nature of Christ with what the latter was lacking—its own will—as Paul, the patriarch of Constantinople, summarized it: '[Christ's] flesh, endowed with a rational and immaterial soul, was through the same consummate unity enriched with divine [things], for [the flesh] obtained the divine and invariable will of the Logos who united it with himself according to the hypostasis, and it was constantly led and moved by him' (ACO II.i.i. 200. 32–4).

According to the monothelites, the human will of Christ by definition would conflict with the divine one because vulnerability to sin and corruption are innate to it. They considered any human will as 'fleshly' (σαρκικόν). A later proponent of monothelitism, Patriarch Macarius of Antioch, confessed in particular 'that our one Lord Jesus Christ is in a new image, i.e. without fleshly wills and human thoughts' (ACO II.ii.ii. 216. 18–19). Anastasius of Sinai testified, maybe exaggeratedly, that the monothelites characterized the human will of Christ as 'cosmic' (κοσμικόν: *Opera* 2 *scholia longiora, scholion* 16. 52), 'evil' (πονηρά: *Opera* 2, 3, 2. 18), and even 'diabolical' (διαβολικόν: *Opera* 2, 3, 2. 4–6). The monothelites insisted that the will-less human nature of Christ could be led and controlled only by the divine will or command (νεῦμα). Only in this way could all possible conflicts between the humanity and the Godhead in Christ be avoided. If there were a human will, (p. 119) however, such a conflict would be inevitable. This was perhaps the most popular argument in support of the single will, occurring as it did in almost every monothelite text.

The dyothelite polemicists agreed with the monothelites that a corrupted human nature together with its will and activity would interfere with the divine one. In Christ, however, neither his human nature nor its will and activity were corrupted. It was Maximus who explained why it was so. For him, no volitional impulse and action of a human being could be opposite to the will of God, if it functioned in accordance with nature (κατὰ φύσιν) and if it was not impelled by sin: 'Whatever is natural and blameless, is not in opposition to each other' (*Opusc.* 20, PG 91. 236A–B). Only what is against nature (παρὰ φύσιν) interferes with the will of God. Christ, who as man willed and acted in accordance with the nature, could not have his human will opposing his divine will. Not the will of Christ, but the common human will is corrupted and vulnerable to sin. As a result, this will is in constant conflict with the divine will. In order to be healed, it has to be adopted by Christ. If the human will had not been assumed by the incarnate Word, it could not be saved from sin. Consequently, the salvation of the whole human nature could not be completed. It becomes an illusion, as Maximus warned (*DP*, PG 91. 305A). If the monothelites were right, then '[Christ] either condemned his own creation as something that is not good … or he begrudged us the healing of our will, depriving us of complete salvation and showing himself to be subject to passion, because he either did not want to or could not save us completely' (*DP*, PG 91. 325B). Moreover, Maximus continued, will is a human faculty that must be saved in the first place, because through the will sin infected the human nature, when Adam first wished to eat and then ate the forbidden fruit. Therefore, if Christ did not assume the will of Adam, human beings would remain under the power of sin:

> If Adam ate willingly, then the will is the first thing in us that became subject to passion. And since the will is the first thing in us that became subject to passion, if, according to them [sc. the monothelites], the Logos

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> did not assume it along with the nature when he became incarnate, I have not become free from sin. And if I have not become free from sin, I am not saved, since whatever is not assumed is not saved.
>
> (*DP*, PG 91. 325A)

In the course of the polemics on the activities and wills of Christ, the two sides showed their intention of embracing the languages of the other. Maximus complied with the language of one activity and will, although of course with necessary explanations and reservations. His opponents admitted the relativity of their own language and demonstrated readiness to embrace the language of two activities and wills, in some sense. What therefore distinguished Maximian neo-Chalcedonianism from the Heraclean one in all its variations was not so much the language, but the attribution of activities and wills. Maximus attributed them to the natures of Christ, as their natural properties, while the Heraclean theologians attributed them to the acting and willing subject of Christ. The ex-patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, said it in straightforward terms: the activity is single because the person is one (*DP*, PG 91. 336A). Paul, the patriarch of Constantinople, in his epistle to Pope Theodore passed from the fact that 'we (p. 120) preach the miracles and recognize the sufferings of one and the same God, the Logos who became flesh and deliberately suffered for our sake through the flesh' (ACO II.ii.ii. 608. 11–12) to the conclusion: 'for this reason we imply one will of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ' (ACO II.ii.ii. 608. 14–15).

Maximus did not establish a direct link between the acting and willing subject, and the activities and wills. For him, one and the same one-who-acts-and-wills does so not 'monadically' but 'doubly' (*DP*, PG 91. 340B), according to Christ's two natures. As the natures are different, so the two activities should be distinguished in accordance with the natures. They cannot be confused, as created cannot be mixed with uncreated. Maximus thus articulated a distinction between created and uncreated activities:

> It is surely necessary for natural things to correspond with their appropriate natures, for how it is possible for the activity of a created nature to be uncreated, without beginning, infinite, creative, and sustaining? And the reverse: how is it possible for the uncreated and eternal nature to be created, a thing made, tried and compelled by other things?
>
> (*DP*, PG 91. 341A)

He applied the same logics to the wills:

> The Fathers decreed that … the same person is visible and invisible, mortal and immortal, corruptible and incorruptible, touchable and untouchable, created and uncreated. And according to the same reverent way of understanding, they also correctly taught that there are two wills of one and the same person.
>
> (*DP*, PG 91. 300B)

Once the will is a natural property, then by analogy with the *communicatio idiomatum* it would be correct to speak about *communicatio voluntatum*. Precisely as with the natural properties, *communicatio voluntatum* does not imply that the wills undergo any change or confusion. They refer, however, to the single subject and in some sense can be considered as whole: 'Thus, if you say that there is a common will by the mode of exchange (τῷ τῆς ἀντιδόσεως τρόπῳ), then you are really saying that there is not one will but two wills' (*DP*, PG 91. 297A). Through the concept of *communicatio voluntatum*, Maximus tried to build a bridge to the monothelite doctrine, and to let its adherents pass over to his side of the divide. His approach to the issue of will was from the duality to unity as *communicatio*.

Maximus' opponents tried to build a similar bridge, though from a different direction. They departed from the unity of will with the purpose of allowing some duality. Pyrrhus, particularly, tried to find compromise formulae which would accommodate duality of will. He suggested the idea of a 'composed' will, by extrapolating the formula 'from two natures': 'Just as we say that it is possible for there to be one synthetic nature from two natures, so it is also possible for there to be one synthetic will from two natural wills' (*DP*, PG 91. 296A). According to Maximus, some monothelites were ready to accept the human will of Christ on the condition that it was adopted by Christ through (p. 121) a 'relative assimilation' (σχετικὴ οἰκείωσις: *DP*, PG 91. 304B) or an 'assimilation in a mere relation' (οἰκείωσις ἐν ψιλῇ σχέσει: *DP*, PG 91. 305A). This assimilation is similar to when we feel what others do or undergo, but do not do or undergo it ourselves: 'We appropriate in a friendly manner something otherwise foreign to us, neither suffering nor effecting any of these things of ourselves' (*DP*, PG 91. 304A). The monothelites, by

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introducing the notion of relative assimilation, apparently wanted to avoid a contradiction between the two wills.

The most interesting monothelite outreach to the camp of the dyothelites was the concept of 'gnomic will' (γνωμικὸν θέλημα). It was connected with the idea of 'relative assimilation' and was proposed as a formula of theological compromise. The monothelites tried to accommodate in this formula the two natural wills in Christ as controlled by a single 'gnomic' will associated with the hypostasis and free choice of Christ (see Farrell 1989: 119). Although in his early writings Maximus accepted the idea of gnomic will, in the polemics with the monothelites he rejected it. This will, according to Maximus, would be a third one in addition to the two natural wills. He argued as follows:

> It is not possible to say that this [assimilated will] is a gnomic will, for how is it possible for a will to proceed from a will? Thus those who say that there is a γνώμη in Christ, as the inquiry demonstrates, teach him to be merely a man, deliberating in a manner proper to ourselves, having ignorance, doubt, and opposition, since one only deliberates about something which is doubtful, not concerning what is free of doubt. We have by nature an appetite for that which is good in a particular way; this comes about through inquiry and counsel. Because of this, then, the gnomic will is fitly ascribed to us, being the mode of the employment [of the will], and not its principle of nature: otherwise, nature itself would change innumerable times.
>
> (*DP*, PG 91. 308C–D)

Thus a gnomic hypostatic will is impossible in Christ, because this will cannot be a source of the two natural wills, as no one will can proceed from another will. More importantly, the gnomic will would turn Christ into a common human being. He would be vulnerable to errors, because the gnomic will in human beings is a result of ignorance, doubts, opinions, and evaluations. Human evaluations of what is most appropriate are often limited and distorted by sin. Therefore, they can be erroneous and misleading. Accordingly, gnomic will as a function of selecting or choosing is a feature of the fallen human nature, and, as such, cannot be ascribed to Christ. Unlike humans, Christ had no necessity to choose between good and bad, because his natural will was always inclined to good. He did not hesitate or doubt, but always knew, willed, and did what was ultimately good.

Both sides of the argument, the monothelites and Maximus, tried to build a bridge to the opposite side. This was a neo-Chalcedonian approach. Maximus from his side employed the idea of *communicatio voluntatum* for rapprochement with the monothelites, an idea that constituted a part of Maximian neo-Chalcedonianism (p. 122) at the stage of polemics over the wills in Christ. The monothelites from their side employed the concepts of assimilated and gnomic will to give at least some satisfaction to the dyothelites. These two concepts became an essential part of their neo-Chalcedonian effort. They considered them as an extension of the concept of 'theandric activity' or even of the Cyrillian formula 'one nature of the incarnated God the Word'.

Neither the Maximian nor the monothelite proposals worked for the other side. Even though each side of the polemics accepted both unity and duality of wills in Christ, they disagreed on their interpretation, failing to work out a common formula on the wills of Christ which would be similar to the formula of the 'theandric activity' in regard to the activities. This meant that neo-Chalcedonianism, which was a theological success in the period of Justinian, became theologically bankrupt under Heraclius and his successors.

Political Neo-Chalcedonianism

Political neo-Chalcedonianism also failed as an ecumenical project because it did not bring unity between the supporters and adversaries of Chalcedon. That this unity was not achieved was not a fault of neo-Chalcedonianism alone. The separation between the two groups became too deep to be bridged by theological formulae only. Neo-Chalcedonianism, however, endangered the unity of the Chalcedonian camp, which became obvious at its monothelite stage, when it received particular support from the state's direct action. The political authorities intervened—even more than in the case of monoenergist neo-Chalcedonianism—in matters of faith and forced people to accept monothelitism. In Syria and Cyprus, they created a large group of Chalcedonian monothelites, the Maronites, who survived even after monothelitism was condemned at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680/1. Monothelite neo-Chalcedonianism featured a strong political aspect. Although all forms of neo-Chalcedonianism after Justinian were political, this one was a 'political neo-Chalcedonianism' par excellence. Maximus fell victim to the political excesses of this sort of neo-Chalcedonianism.

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Conclusions to Neo-Chalcedonianism of Maximus

Maximus addressed various excesses and abuses of neo-Chalcedonianism, as they manifested themselves in monoenergism and monothelitism. The potential for abuse was innate in the original neo-Chalcedonianism, as Justinian designed it. At that early stage, neo-Chalcedonianism was already political and obsessed with (p. 123) theological formulae. Under Heraclius, these features of neo-Chalcedonianism became particularly sharp. Maximus considered them deviations from the original neo-Chalcedonianism and tried to correct them. His method was to endorse the convergence formulae, but also to look behind them at the core of the theological problems. Maximus largely dispelled the charm of the theological formulae by insisting that all sides in the search for unity should share not only formulae, but also their hermeneutics. His own neo-Chalcedonianism, nevertheless, was not conservative. He did not intend to confine it to the limits of the Justinianic era. Maximus developed neo-Chalcedonianism further and applied it to the issues of activities and wills of Christ. As a creative neo-Chalcedonian, he suggested, however, his own formulae and hermeneutics, which were alternative to the monoenergist and monothelite. At the same time he was cautious and critical of what he believed to be abuses of this otherwise fruitful theological method.

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Notes:

([1]) *Ad Tiberium* 589. 12; *Quod unus* 718. 31; 743. 38; 759. 33.

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Cyril Hovorun

Cyril Hovorun is a scholar in patristics and ecclesiology. His most recent position was at the Yale Divinity School.

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Classical Philosophical Influences: Aristotle and Platonism

Marius Portaru

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Abstract and Keywords

Portaru looks at the influences of Classical Greek philosophy on Maximus from a technical point of view, with special emphasis on Aristotle. By 'technical point of view', two things are understood: firstly, the philosophical-theological conditions which predetermined Maximus' philosophical interaction (which includes acceptance and rejection) with a particular ancient author, whether pagan or Christian; and secondly, the definition of a correct method of identifying Maximus' sources. The chapter's focus on Aristotle does not preclude minimal, but necessary, references to Plato, middle-Platonists, Stoics, Plotinus, and the neo-Platonists.

Keywords: Maximus' sources, Aristotle, Plato, middle-Platonism, Stoicism, Plotinus, neo-Platonism

SUPPOSE a contemporary Christian were forced to defend his or her biblically and patristically-rooted doctrine forbidding abortion. Imagine that the discussion with opponents began with ontological considerations about the human person. The non-Christian would presumably try to argue that the foetus is yet to be a human person, that the newborn will progressively acquire this status around the age of 2 or 3, once the linguistic skills, memory, and self-consciousness become manifest. The Christian, on the contrary, would affirm that the human person is a composite of body and soul, and that these are brought into existence simultaneously, from the first moment of the human zygote's formation. The soul is the principle of life and development of the body, hence of the foetus, and it already contains all the distinctive capacities—rational thinking, language, memory, DNA—that characterize a human person and which will be later apparent, around the age of 2 or 3. At death, which represents the separation of the soul from the body, the soul survives and joins the intelligible world of human souls, angels, and God, while the body disappears, being decomposed to its basic material elements. Since death is an accident in human nature (had Adam obeyed, God would have not used the radical pedagogy of death), this state of separation between body and soul lasts until resurrection, when the soul joins again *its* (transfigured) body.

Studying the structure of such an apology, a historian of ideas might conclude that our Christian is in fact an Aristotelian, because he or she used Aristotle's hylomorphism, according to which (a) the soul is the form and 'the first actuality of the natural body possessed of organs' (*An.* 2. 412b5–6) and (b) the human composite is a perfect unity. Conversely, another interpreter might argue that our Christian is (also) a Platonist, because he or she understands the soul as a distinct substance from the body, more precisely as the superior part of the human composite. This part alone survives after death. (p. 128) Finally, a third exegete might emphasize the final resurrection, suggesting that our Christian overcomes both Platonism and Aristotelianism through a superior synthesis, according to which the body and the soul will finally constitute a perfect, inseparable unity; the Platonic opposition between them is completely lost in favour of their perfect harmony within a *spiritualized* body.

We should observe that none of these descriptions would be accurate and complete. First, each and every one of them tends to privilege one element of our Christian's discourse and subordinate the rest to this single key element. Secondly, they all minimize the biblical-patristic origin of the overall anthropological vision of our apologist. Thirdly,

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despite the fact that the last description seems to do justice to the distinctive Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, it does not offer sufficient account of the interaction between what is specifically Christian and what resembles Platonic and Aristotelian doctrine.

The theological discourse just described is in essence and origin perfectly Christian, but articulated through Platonic and Aristotelian concepts. We may, however, be able to find ourselves on a better path to understanding what Georges Florovsky termed 'the anthropomorphism of Revelation', thus viewing it as more than a mere accommodation to this or that philosophical concept (Florovsky 1976: 22).

Some Terminology

In order to grasp the concrete structure of Maximus' anthropomorphism of Revelation, we need first to clarify the relevant terminology, then to establish a method of research capable of underlining compelling connections between classical philosophers and patristic authors. The reception of author A1 by author A2 usually takes one or more of the following forms. We say that A1 represents a *source* for A2 when a characteristic feature of A1 affects essentially the vision of A2, or when the characteristic feature imported by A2 from A1 is not changed in any sense, but integrated as such in their thinking. In this respect, the doctrine of the natural will (*Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 12C–13A), an original teaching of Maximus, became a source of John of Damascus' Christology (*Exp.fid*. 36, Kotter 1973: 89–90, 51–9). We say that A1 represents a *positive influence* on A2 when a characteristic feature of A1 is accepted by A2, but is transformed in order to fit into A2's vision and interests. This second case of reception might be called a creative interaction, and what is imported by A2 from A1, though changed, might affect A2's thinking, either essentially or peripherally. A good example is Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine of perpetual progress (ἐπέκτασις), which implies human effort. This was transformed by Maximus into the doctrine of ever-moving rest (ἀεικίνητος στάσις), which implies no human effort (Larchet 1996: 670–1; Blowers 1992). We say that A1 represents a *negative influence* on A2 when a characteristic feature of A1 is wholly rejected by A2 and argued to be mistaken. A negative influence, however, could lead to a positive outcome when it stimulates A2 to find the right or merely a better solution than A1. A renowned example is (p. 129) Maximus' rejection of the Origenist doctrine of the fall of souls from the timeless union with God because of satiety. Against Origenism, Maximus defines a different ontology, according to which creaturely movement is not the result of a fall, but creatures' natural possibility to advance towards God (Sherwood 1955b: 92–102). While I am sure that within these three main kinds of reception of A1 by A2 further divisions could be made, what I have proposed so far is sufficient for present purposes.

The reader will have observed that I have picked my examples only from the Christian tradition. I have intentionally avoided examples of interaction between a Christian author and a classical philosopher, because this is more complex and would be of no help in clarifying my terms. For the time being, I need only say that most of the interactions between Christians and classical philosophers fit into the second and the third categories. There are a number of cases in the earlier period of the Christian tradition when a classical philosophical concept is a *source* for a Christian author: when this happens, it often leads to a heretical idea. Such was the trinitarian subordinationism in the Christian authors of the second and third centuries CE, that resulted from the assimilation of the Logos, the second Person of the Trinity, with the Logos of middle Platonism, a principle intended as an intermediary between God and the material cosmos. This subordinationism, radicalized by Arius, was successfully rejected only by the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 CE).

Methodological Reflections

In the case of a concealed reference—and sometimes even in its presence[1]—we need strong evidence to establish a direct or mediated contact between A2 and A1. Sufficient and necessary links between the two authors must be identified—lengthy sequences of words or, at the level of content, specific parallels and similar contextualizing of concepts.

When one or more lengthy sequences of words from A1 are found in A2, it is always necessary to consider how the common words/concepts are contextualized in the two authors before concluding on the basis of textual similarities alone whether A1 is a source, a positive influence, or a negative influence for A2. I limit my examples to three of the best analyses of Maximus' interaction with previous authors. The first study is Völker 1961, which

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identifies the many instances in which Maximus uses Dionysian language and ideas. However, the more recent research of Louth 1993 and De Andia 1996 arrives at a more nuanced vision of Maximus' 'dependence' on Dionysius by means of a deeper contextualizing of their common concepts: the theology of the former is rather neo-Areopagite (and neo-Cappadocian). My following example points to the (p. 130) first systematic research regarding Maximus' interaction with classical philosophy, conducted by Lackner 1962: once again, the numerous textual examples provided by Lackner are not subject to an additional—and necessary—contextualizing test. Thirdly, at the opposite pole stands the study of Gauthier 1954, who compared and contextualized with deep insight the central features of Maximus' psychology of action, on the one hand, and the concept of action in Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Aristotelian commentators, on the other hand. The result pointed out the fascinating originality of Maximus' vision despite so many classical concepts mixed in its articulation.

Otherwise, shorter or longer textual parallels may remain inconclusive or misleading. More often than not, commonplaces (concepts and metaphors) and what is common language in Maximus (hence, unspecific and inconclusive) have been considered as signs of dependence upon another author. At best, commonplaces and common language could show the affiliation to a certain tradition, but in order to be able to speak of a source, a positive, or a negative influence, one should underline *necessary* connections. One necessary ingredient of a necessary connection is the following: regardless of the degree or form, a characteristic feature of A1's thinking must be found as a component of a characteristic feature of A2's thinking. In light of this, there is no wonder that Sherwood (1955b: VII) complained that 'in Maximian studies one of the outstanding lacks has been a knowledge of the Confessor's writings in their own context. Men have written of his doctrine, and written well, but taking here a text, there a text on which to build *their* structure' (italics mine).

We have a significantly better chance of understanding the specific interaction of Maximus with other authors—Christian as well as classical philosophers—if we compare the characteristic elements of Maximus' theology and philosophy and the 'spirit' of his overall vision, on the one hand, with the characteristic elements and overall thinking of the authors claimed to have had an impact on him, on the other, than if we look only at their casual and disparate language and images. This approach seems particularly appropriate when we recall that 'the inner form of Maximus' work is synthesis' (von Balthasar 2003: 29) and not compilation. As a consequence, the epistemological value of the concept of 'mediated contact' appears to be highly problematic. Can we really establish what is mediated and what is direct? Sometimes we can, but certainly not always; and a contextualized theological and philosophical analysis of the relevant concept is preferable to any reliance on mere textual resemblances (Gauthier 1954 is a convincing example); of course, the historical context as well has an important role to play.

Previous Scholarship

Since 1941, when modern western scholarship discovered Maximus, very few have claimed that Maximus used Aristotle *as a source* for his theological vision systematically. As will soon become clear, such positions have never been sufficiently supported (p. 131) by textual references. Rather, their authors pick a particular concept from Aristotle and Maximus and build around it artificially, paying insufficient attention to the fact that Maximus could (at most) have seen, for example, an 'Aristotle transformed' (Sorabji 1990). In such interpretations Aristotle seems rather to be used as an instrument to reconstruct Maximus' theology in light of later ideas.

Hans Urs von Balthasar identifies the Aristotelianism of Maximus (a) in the overcoming of Dionysius' metaphysical emanationism (of neo-Platonic origin) and in the central importance given to the concrete universal, the particular human being; Dionysius' influence is limited to the spiritual doctrine (von Balthasar 2003: 60–2); (b) in his naturalism, in the sense that 'Maximus envisages a naturally lasting cosmos as the supporting ground for all supernatural divinization'.[2] Von Balthasar's book was very influential in denouncing the 'rampages of an unchecked supernaturalism', for which he substituted the preservation of 'the rights of nature' through the metaphysics of Aristotle and the theology of Chalcedon (von Balthasar 2003: 71). He thus set the tone for much contemporary scholarship by means of principles such as: (a) 'However one understands the structure of synthesis (in Maximus), it remains always a predominantly Aristotelian concept, even when it is pressed into service of a neo-Platonic, mystical striving towards union' (von Balthasar 2003: 71); (b) 'Maximus is a real predecessor of Aquinas, anticipating his concern to preserve the essence of every thing … so both of them conceive the relationship of nature and grace in basically the same way' (von Balthasar 2003: 71); (c) 'In this

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sense, the christological theme in Maximus' conception of the universe embraces the three others we have discussed: it corrects neo-Platonic mysticism, confirms Aristotelian metaphysics, and prevents the Origenist-monastic strain from becoming simple escapism' (von Balthasar 2003: 73). After this Aristotle-oriented introduction, the reader would expect to find more than just two footnotes about the Stagirite in von Balthasar's entire book (von Balthasar 2003: 158 n.72, 240 n.158), neither of which points to a precise text deemed to have stamped Maximus' vision.

Von Balthasar's concern with the particular was developed in the 1970s and the 80s by a series of theologians trained in the Thomist tradition. They described Maximus' conception of the relationship between God and humanity in terms of an intentional union through love, in which the creaturely freedom of human persons is fully preserved (Riou 1973; Garrigues 1976; Léthel 1979; Piret 1983). Interestingly, although all these writers avoid discussing the nature and degree of Aristotle's presence in Maximus, they nevertheless take for granted that Maximus manifests an Aristotelian understanding of key (p. 132) concepts such as essence (οὐσία) and energy or activity (ἐνέργεια). Significantly, in the only reference to the meaning of ἐνέργεια that I could find, Riou explicitly recognizes a difference of use between a distinctively Aristotelian actuality and Maximus' ἐνέργεια: 'On traduit en général κατ᾽ ἐνέργειαν par "en acte". La transcription littérale par "selon l'énérgie" vient à conserver au mot ἐνέργεια son sens fort, attaché à la divinisation par l' "énérgie" de l'Esprit' (Riou 1973: 96 n.21). For the rest, the presence of Aristotle in Maximus is merely (and unintelligibly) asserted:[3]

> Cette confiance dans la nature et dans son dynamisme lui donne une consistence "ontologique" qui rapproche le système dionysien de la théologie de Proclus, et finalement d'Aristote. Il en reprend une conception du monde organisée par l'idée de causalité divine et d'ordinateur de tous les êtres à Dieu considéré comme leur fin dernière.
>
> (Riou 1973: 38)

Further proposals along the same lines are developed by Renczes 2003 and Lévy 2006. Both hold that the description of the God–human relationship in Maximus as a personal–intentional union through love is insufficient, and instead try to understand it through the interplay between ἕξις (in a Thomist sense) and ἐνέργεια. Renczes offers a detailed analysis of the meaning of ἐνέργεια in Aristotle and proposes correcting Aristotle, mainly because he advances an insufficient account of how and why δύναμις has to become ἐνέργεια within a relationship of finality (Renczes 2003: 57–73; see Larchet 2005). Rather differently, Lévy maintains that Maximus does not draw directly on Aristotle, but on Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*. He believes that Maximus imports (probably) from Simplicius such concepts as divine ἐνέργεια, 'pâtir substantiel', σχέσις, ἐπιτηδειότης, etc. His understanding of participation, however, as an elevation and expansion of creatures' natural energy under the action of God's being-in-actuality within a created relationship between God and humankind clearly contradicts what Maximus affirms (see below, and Larchet 2008).

A turn away from the Aristotelianizing readings developed by von Balthasar was marked by the works of Walther Völker. Before Völker, however—and at the same time as von Balthasar (1941, 1961)—R. A. Gauthier had carefully analysed Maximus' texts and the ideas expressed in them, and showed that Maximus' doctrine of (natural) will is profoundly original, and that the traditional Aristotelian *terminology* was transmitted to him both through neo-Platonic commentators of Aristotle, and especially through Nemesius of Emesa. He concluded that, in what concerns the conception of human action, 'it does not appear that St Maximus read Aristotle himself', and that there is a discontinuity between Thomas Aquinas and Maximus (Gauthier 1954: 71 and 98). Shortly after Gauthier, Sherwood studied *Amb.Io.* in context, and discovered that the triad οὐσία—δύναμις—ἐνέργεια has only neo-Platonic antecedents, but that (p. 133) it is transformed by Maximus to fit into his anti-Origenist and christological polemic (Sherwood 1955b: 103–6, 111 n.13). Endre von Ivánka claimed that Maximus achieved a synthesis between Aristotle and Plato, but 'regrettably' tended more heavily towards the Platonic vision: the full reality of beings being located in the transcendent Forms (von Ivánka 1958).

None of these scholars directly challenged von Balthasar's contention that Maximus' philosophical framework is primarily Aristotelian. The first to assume this task (successfully) was Völker. In a brilliant study published in 1964, he dismissed von Balthasar's naturalism, observing that 'it is a logical consequence that Maximus adopts the Platonic doctrine of being as well [plus biblical concepts: MP], since he clearly distinguishes between 'being in a proper sense' (κυρίως εἶναι) and 'being not in a proper sense' (οὐ κυρίως εἶναι). 'All life is dead in itself; it

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possesses life only through participation in the divine life' (Völker 1964: 60–1). At the end of a detailed and precise investigation of neo-Platonic and Aristotelian concepts in Maximus' ontology, Völker concludes that his philosophical framework is of a neo-Platonic nature; Dionysian and Aristotelian elements are mixed together, so as to fit an original synthesis (Völker 1964: 79; see also Völker 1961).

Völker's identification of a fundamentally neo-Platonic ontological framework for Maximus was decisively confirmed and developed by a great number of scholars.[4] My own view is that the Platonic framework is essentially helpful in giving an intellectual account of much, but surely not all, Christian thinking. At least, Maximus' thinking and expression point in the direction of a Platonic-morphism of Revelation.

Beside the neo-Platonic and Aristotelian-oriented *Quellenforschung*, there is a group I would dub 'of philological persuasion', characterized by theologically and philosophically neutral research (Lackner 1962; Roueché 1974, 1980, and 1990; Moreschini 2005a and 2005b).

Finally, a group of Orthodox scholars should be mentioned, who all offer more or less accurate accounts of Maximus, and have a balanced attitude to the details of his interaction with classical philosophers (Larchet 1996 and 2010; Louth 1996; Bradshaw 2004 and 2010; Loudovikos 2010). It is worth reproducing here the comments of Bradshaw on his debated book *Aristotle East and West* nine years after its publication:

> … the exegesis of Aristotle plays little role in my reading of Palamas or of the Greek Fathers generally. It is certainly true that I present Aristotle as the beginning of a long arc of theological reflection that makes use of the concept of *energeia*, but the very length and complexity of that trajectory make it impossible to draw any simple connection between *energeia* in Aristotle and in the Greek Fathers.
>
> (Bradshaw 2013: 256–7)

(p. 134) In particular, Bradshaw and Loudovikos use Maximus philosophically when they engage with contemporary philosophy. That is precisely Maximus' procedure against monothelitism: to create new categories of thought, more fit to express Christian doctrine.

To conclude, only among Aristotelianizing interpreters—and even here rarely—is Aristotle seen as a *source* of Maximus; for others, he is either a *positive influence* or a *negative influence*. Let us now see step by step what conditioned the reception of Aristotle by Maximus.

Aristotle's Indirect Influence on Maximus

Aristotle's influence on Maximus was historically destined to be limited. Elias, David, Ps-Elias, and Stephan were all Christian philosophers in Alexandria, and it is certain that Maximus came in direct contact with them.[5] Irrespective of whether Maximus was born in Constantinople or in Palestine, both the Greek *Life of Maximus* and the Syriac *Life of Maximus* agree that Maximus possessed extended philosophical knowledge and a brilliant mind. Not only do his writings attest to philosophical competence, but there is also the fact that some short logical *compendia* (a minor literary genre in Byzantium) were attributed to him, to 'Maximus the true philosopher' (Roueché 1980: 79). Roueché described (and also edited some of) them as: (a) a compilation of philosophical definitions; (b) ultimately based on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories*, and directly dependent on sixth-century Aristotelian lectures in Alexandria; (c) deriving from Christian editors and perhaps intended for Christian students, since the examples are of a Christian mould; (d) having been compiled between the end of the sixth and the middle of the eighth century, and showing familiarity with the *Prolegomena* of Elias and David (Roueché 1974: 61–2; 1980 and 1990).

Yet while these handbooks of logic were attributed to Maximus, he is not their author; Maximus' authorship of the short collections of definitions inserted in the body of his authentic works is also doubtful, but not totally improbable (Van Deun 2000b: 125–7).

(p. 135) If the philosophical tradition of the seventh century strongly Platonized Aristotle,[6] the church Fathers also heavily conditioned Aristotle's reception by Maximus. Maximus comes at a mature stage in the evolution of the Greek-speaking Christian tradition, which had many previous opportunities to spell out its rejection of Aristotelian metaphysics, logic, and ethics. Generally, the Fathers showed a negative attitude towards Aristotle—or, better,

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their Aristotle, because with few exceptions (Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Nemesius, Philoponus) a first-hand knowledge of Aristotle is unlikely, the doxographical tradition being the normal source. Patristic criticism of Aristotle centred on the following points: (a) that Aristotle denied divine providence in the lower part of the universe; (b) that happiness required external goods, such as wealth; (c) that the universe was eternal; (d) that the soul was mortal, being considered only as the *entelechy* of the body (Lilla 2006: 518). From the fourth century onwards, following the Arian crisis and especially the polemic against the radical Arian Eunomius of Cyzicus, Aristotle's logic and dialectic were associated with heresy (Runia 1989: 23–6).[7] Gregory of Nyssa calls Aetius' 'impiety' the 'evil artifice of Aristotle' (Ἀριστοτέλους κακοτεχνία) (*C. Eun.* 1. 55). Gregory of Nazianzus (the Theologian), who exercised great influence on Maximus, as is manifest from the *Books of Difficulties*, wrote much that was hostile to Aristotle's philosophy. (I believe we can presume a first-hand knowledge of some of Aristotle by Gregory the Theologian, on the ground of *Or.*7. 20, where he writes that his departed brother Caesarius studied Aristotle; besides, Aristotle's works were available in Athens, where Gregory completed his education.) Gregory holds that the Stoic doctrine of εὐδαιμονία is superior to Aristotle's (*Ep*. 32. 5–7), and that Christian doctrine should be expressed 'in the way of fishermen, not of Aristotle' (*Or*. 23. 12). If we still need to resort to philosophy, then not the 'worldly thought' of Aristotle (τὸ ἀνθρωπικὸν τῶν δογμάτων, *Or*. 27. 10), but the Platonists are 'those who have thought best about God and are nearest to us' (*Or*. 31. 5). Nemesius of Emesa, who handed down much Aristotelian terminology to Maximus, did not hesitate to criticize the specifically Aristotelian doctrine of the soul as the activity (ἐντελέχεια) of the body (*Nat. hom.* 2. 26. 10–29. 18). Finally, Philoponus deployed philosophical arguments against Aristotle, especially against his account of the eternity of the world.

Aristotle in Maximus

When Maximus alluded to Epicurus' and Aristotle's 'vain effort' to deny the immortality of the soul (*Ep*. 7, PG 91. 437B), he was not uncritically following Gregory of Nazianzus, his much admired teacher, but was proposing a theological standpoint, which drastically (p. 136) limited Aristotle's influence. This allusion, indeed the only occasion when Maximus invokes Aristotle by name, is symptomatic: on the one hand, of his imprecise reflection on an Aristotle, read indirectly,[8] or a standard interpretation of the intellectual milieu of the seventh century; on the other hand, of Maximus' refusal to follow the neo-Platonic procedure of accommodating Aristotle, in his case with the 'most divine Christian philosophy' (*Myst*. 5).

A proper understanding of Maximus' thinking can, it seems, be reached by synthesizing his 'ontology' and 'anthropology'. His theological discourse always has a spiritual background, while his 'natural philosophy' is subsumed under an epistemology centred on the purification of the mind (νοῦς) through asceticism, virtues, and intense prayer (*Myst*. 5). A good example is the *Ambigua Addressed to John* 10, a dense philosophical text denying the eternity of the universe and the pre-existence of souls, and on time and space as the *sine qua non* of the created world. Here Maximus does not hesitate to insert long sections of spiritualizing biblical exegesis, and to explain bluntly that 'they [the Saints] do not contemplate either Creation or Scripture like us in a material or lowly way. They do not acquire the blessed knowledge of God only by sense and appearances and forms, using letters and syllables, which lead to mistakes and bafflement over the judgement of the truth, but solely by the mind, rendered most pure and released from all material mists' (*Amb.Io*. 10. 30, PG 91. 1160B; Louth 1996: 128). That said, we can now return to the specifically Aristotelian elements (if any) to be found in Maximus.

Maximus' Doctrine of Participation

To complete the explanation of why Aristotle's impact on Maximus is limited, it is best to begin with the latter's doctrine of participation, which fundamentally inhibited his sympathy for Aristotle. This is also appropriate because of a prominent scholarly tendency to associate Maximus' conception of being (οὐσία) with Aristotle, for that concept must be reassessed within the framework of participation.

According to Maximus, participation is communication of being; hence, the presupposition at the heart of his concept of 'participation' (in this he follows Gregory of Nyssa and Ps-Dionysius) is: if Being is, beings are not; if beings are, Being is not. Unlike Aristotle, Maximus believes that the Being in beings is not something of this world and of the same substance, but that it completely transcends all created beings.

At the ontological level, between God and creatures are the energies of God, called 'works which God did not

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begin to create' (*Th.oec*. 1. 49): they are uncreated, distinct from the essence of God, existing eternally in God independently of Creation. They are (p. 137) not separated from the essence of God and are not Proclan-like mean terms, hypostases (ὑποστάσεις): Maximus does not affirm that they exist by participation, and accordingly, they do not destroy God's simplicity. God infinitely transcends these energies, such as goodness, life, immortality, simplicity, immutability, infinity, virtue, and holiness; creatures exist by participation in them. In contrast to Proclus, who calls the One 'unparticipated' (*Elementa theologica* 23–4, Dodds 1963: 27–9), Maximus never calls God 'unparticipated'; on the contrary, he describes the final union with God as 'the entire God present in the entire creatures' (*Amb.Io.* 7 and 41). Divine energies are the participated presence of the unparticipated divine essence, the divine power through which the tripersonal God is active and immanent in Creation. They are communicated to Creation according to the *logoi*, divine uncreated thoughts about Creation and the definitions and divine purposes of every created thing. In accordance with the *logoi*, God bestows being on every creature. God places all perfections (virtues) in human and angelic natures; created essences are therefore marked by a Godward movement. Yet creatures have no active role in their Creation from nothing.

Maximus corrects both neo-Platonic emanationism with his Christian doctrine of Creation from nothing, and the neo-Platonic circular movement of remaining–procession–return by placing remaining (μονή) at the end of the process and attributing procession (πρόοδος) to God's energies alone—for creatures have no active role in their creation—and by conceiving of return (ἐπιστροφή) as a merely linear ascending movement which starts with the coming of beings into existence and ends in the afterlife. The only remaining (μονή) in God that Maximus recognizes in creatures is their foreknowledge by God expressed through the doctrine of *logoi*.

At the anthropological level, since creatures have nothing of their own, Creation is necessarily a mode of deification as the result of God's energies present and active in the essence of every creature; but it is not identical with final deification. Elsewhere I have resolved (Portaru 2013) the metaphysical difficulty of Creation as already deification: according to Maximus, the gradual nature of the development of creatures rests on the difference between created and uncreated. The two basic expressions of gradual development (firstly, being–well-being–eternal well-being; secondly, praxis–contemplation–theology) must themselves be divided in two: the first two terms are related to what is created, the third to the uncreated. The criterion for this classification is the relationship between human natural energies and divine energies (grace) in the process of deification. In the first degree of participation, human natural energies are at work *together with* the divine energies (grace). At this stage the participation of creatures in God is also self-creation, since the measure of their final union with God is defined analogically, according to their love for God and virtue. In the second degree of participation, human natural energies come to a complete rest. They are not annihilated, but remain active only in receptivity, while the divine energies alone effect further deification, since there is no power in human nature to transcend itself. Final deification is the supreme form of participation. As produced by the divine energies alone, it is the foundation of Maximus' main argument against Origenism: since divine energies are now the only energies active in human beings, (p. 138) and human natural energies are in a state of complete rest (they are not annihilated, but 'active' in the willingly desired receptivity of the divine energies), no further Fall is possible, nor was there any original union of souls with God. This argument is secured by Maximus' ontological conception of participation and deification: since creatures are *naturally* moved towards God, they must also *naturally* be fulfilled by God, if they are to be happy. (Christology is the third essential part of Maximus' doctrine of participation, but I will omit it here, mainly because the theological ideas contained in it are not relevant for my discussion of Maximus' relationship with classical philosophy.)

Such a doctrine of participation cannot allow much space for specific Aristotelian elements, not only because of its intrinsic features, but also because of its counterpart: Aristotle's doctrine of the Prime Mover, which was introduced to solve problems about the origin of motion, but not as cause of existence, nor (despite some scholarly opinion) efficient cause. In the final formulation of *Metaphysics* 12. 7–9, the Prime Mover is immaterial and non-spatial. God moves the cosmos as a final cause, namely, as the object of desire. As supreme Mind, God 'thinks Godself', and only Godself, for it would be unworthy if God thought anything less—of course, there is nothing 'more' than God to think. Consequently, the object of God's thought is not 'composite'; accordingly, the notion that God's thought could be of God's Ideas is absolutely impossible (Rist 1989: 174). Such a God, unable to be an efficient cause and to exercise providence, is far removed from the incarnated Logos which bestows life on everything in relation to the Logos (*Amb.Io*. 7).

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Being

Aristotle's categories proved to be a *positive influence* (though most likely indirectly) on Maximus.[9] This is particularly true for the category 'being' (οὐσία), which must be interpreted only in connection with the framework of participation.

It should be already apparent that Maximus' concept of being resembles neo-Platonism more than Aristotle, but through the fundamental doctrines of Creation of everything (including matter) out of nothing and the Incarnation, it is ultimately Christian. The triad of essence–power–energy (οὐσία–δύναμις–ἐνέργεια), despite the similarity of words, is not Aristotelian; it can be found as such in Proclus (*Elementa theologica* 169), and in Dionysius (*Hier.cael*. 11.2). However, it may be misinterpreted: created essence is not independent of God's energies 'implanted (ἐμπέφυκεν) by grace in creatures as an infused natural power (δύναμις ἔμφυτος) which clearly proclaims that God is in all things' (*Th.oec*. 1.49). Final deification is not one of any (p. 139) creature's natural capacities (δύναμις); only divine energies[10] are active to produce it. Aristotle offers 'scientific' descriptions of the human being, paying attention to its constitution, but is less concerned with 'human value'. In his *Ep*. 2 on love, Maximus takes a contrary approach: passions and vices split human nature and cause suffering; completeness can be achieved again only through love. The equivalence between essence (οὐσία) and nature (φύσις) (PG 91. 149B) is not a sign of Aristotelianism (as Lilla 2006: 534 suggested), but is inherited from the christological debates of the sixth century. John of Caesarea, one of the main opponents of Severus of Antioch, deploys it against 'monophysitism' (*Apologia concilii Chalcedonensis* 1, Richard 1977: 49), as do Leontius of Byzantium and Leontius of Jerusalem.

Maximus prefers certain features of Aristotle's ontology: every created nature, either intelligible or sensible, is a compound of essence and accidents (e.g. *Car*. 4. 9; *Q.Thal*. 40; *Amb.Io*. 67, PG 91. 1400C); sensible compounds are from matter and form (*Amb.Io*. 67, PG 91. 1397A). Aristotle's concept of form corresponds partially to Maximus' *logoi* of beings, which give shape (*Amb.Io*. 10. 3, PG 91. 1113A). However, Maximus is more coherent, locating the *logoi* in the Logos (*Amb.Io*. 7), while Aristotle has been criticized for giving an insufficient account of where the forms reside before their union with matter (Loux 2012: 394–5). The *logoi* as divine will and thoughts, creatures' definition and existential scope, have little in common with mediaeval 'universals' conceived of rather as entities: the *logoi* cannot be reified/objectified in any sense (Louth 2010: 79), hence scholarly discussion of universals in Maximus could (but need not) create confusion. We may now move on to look at 'motion' and 'energy/activity', two concepts in Maximus most easily associated with Aristotle.

Motion

First, motion. It is commonly and correctly believed that the re-evaluation of creaturely motion is Maximus' strongest argument against Origenism. Its distinctive features include (a) the idea of motion as a natural quality; (b) a merely linear ascendant motion; (c) a motion directed to a final end (*Amb* 7). It is also commonly held that these bring Maximus' vision close to Aristotle's. However, there is only a formal resemblance between Maximus and Aristotle; their background metaphysics distinguish them. In *Car*. 4. 9 Maximus refers to mutability as creatures' natural characteristic, recalling Aristotle's doctrine of biological change and alteration; in Maximus, creaturely change has a metaphysical foundation: the Creation of the universe from nothing is a change and a movement (πάθος), produced by the Prime Mover as an efficient cause (*Amb.Io*. 23, PG 91. 1257D–1260A). Maximus' conception of the divine efficient cause is neo-Platonic; hence we may rightly suppose that the idea of 'natural movement' was rather inspired by Plotinus: in the process of generation of Intellect from the One, the (p. 140) external natural activity of the One is hypostasized and becomes the Intellect, so that the internal activity of the Intellect consists uniquely in the contemplation of the One. The erotic return[11] of the Intellect to the One is necessary, being the Intellect's immanent natural activity, and as such representing an act of self-constitution (*Enn*. 5. 4. 2; 5. 1. 6). Sherwood (1955b: 93, 96) observed that the pairing of 'motion–rest' is a commonplace in Hellenistic philosophy, and it cannot be found in Dionysius and Proclus, but only in Plotinus (*Enn*. 6. 3. 27). Though Maximus' definition of motion directed to an end (*Amb.Io*.7, PG 91. 1072C) reminds us of Aristotle (*Met*. Λ, 2 994B16), it has been traced back to Evagrius by Sherwood (1955b: 25). What has been less emphasized in previous scholarship is the ambivalence of Maximus' use of 'end' or 'cessation' (τέλος): it can mean 'limit' (πέρας)—and this resembles Aristotle—or 'purpose' (σκόπος)—and this distinction is Stoic. Maximus appropriates it within the framework of deification. Deification is the limit of human natural energies (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1076C; *Amb.Io*. 15, PG 91. 1217C), and also divine council's purpose for creatures (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1092B–C). Finally—and most

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significantly—unlike Aristotle, Maximus speaks of deification as the identity (ταυτόν) of creatures' beginning and end (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1081D–1084A); these are identical, because (a) the same divine grace—indicated by the expression ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ θεὸς εἶναι λαμβάνων—conferred according to the *logos* of Being at the moment of Creation becomes fully present in creatures at the moment of deification, according to the *logos* of eternal well-being; (b) God's energy alone is active in both Creation and deification. This challenges the idea that metaphysical motion is simply linear in Maximus' vision: it is so only in relation to the middle term 'well-being' (εὖ εἶναι) of the ontological triad of being–well-being–eternal well-being (εἶναι–εὖ εἶναι and ἀεὶ εὖ εἶναι), but the extremes of Creation (εἶναι) and deification (ἀεὶ εὖ εἶναι) introduce a sort of symmetry. I would not label it 'circularity', because as the historical time allowed for well-being (εὖ εἶναι) is irreversible, so is the final union with—or separation from—God. Given this symmetry, the ontological triad (being–well-being and eternal well-being) supposes simultaneously an asymmetric (on the part of creatures) and symmetric (on the part of God) extension.

Energy

I have already discussed Maximus' central concept of (divine) energy or energies (ἐνέργεια/ἐνέργειαι). He employs it mainly in ontological and christological contexts, and it has subtle differences of meaning when used in one or the other; hence, we should avoid reducing one to the other (confusions of this kind are to be found in Garrigues 1974). Beside the interest in Maximus' Christology, much has been written on the concept of energy as a consequence of the debate on whether divine energies are uncreated and truly distinct (though not separated) from divine essence: the debate is ongoing and (p. 141) progress has been made,[12] yet it remains a fruitful topic for further research. Maximus' theology is one of the main sources of the theological assessment of ἐνέργεια, and the comparison with Aristotle is necessary for various reasons. I can only briefly note here that Aristotle's understanding of ἐνέργεια gradually evolved from 'natural capacity' (e.g. to speak) to 'actuality' (e.g. I am speaking) by separating ἐνέργεια from motion (κίνησις); later, these two concepts will be rather homogenized, and even in Aristotle ἐνέργεια does not mean always 'actuality', but in many cases 'activity'. Significant in this respect are some very recent interpretations of Aristotle (Beere 2009 and Kosman 2013), according to which the predominant meaning of ἐνέργεια in the Stagirite's works is 'activity', not 'actuality', as previously believed.

In Maximus, energy (ἐνέργεια) is understood as a natural motion, a natural capacity, or a natural power which can be communicated. The triad essence–power–energy is often expressed only through two of these terms, because firstly, power/energy always presupposes an essence, and secondly, power and energy are often synonyms (Larchet 2010: 334–40). The latter case is not an Aristotelian feature; it can be associated with Plotinus' One, described not as a pure thinking of itself, but as 'the productive power of all things' (*Enn*. 5. 4. 2). To find out how energy is understood, we must turn to the most complete and important definition to be found in Maximus' entire corpus: *Amb.Th*. 5 (Janssens 2002: 19–20). Here Maximus defines natural energy as (a) the natural constitutive power (συστατικὴ δύναμις) of a nature; (b) the first and proper characteristic of a nature; (c) the most general movement of nature, that which gives it a specific form (εἰδοποιὸς κίνησις); (d) comprising all natural properties of a nature; (e) as lacking to non-being alone. Everything that exists has natural energy; wherever there is a nature of any kind, there is also a natural energy. This is the principle on which Maximus' entire Christology is built.

At the ontological level, the *locus classicus* for the meaning of the divine energies is to be found in the *Two Centuries on Theology and the Incarnation*, where Maximus speaks of the 'works of God, that God did not begin to create' (*Th.oec*. 1. 48–50); creatures exist by participation in them. This text has been (rightly) interpreted in the sense that the divine energies are multiple, distinct, but not separated from 'God', who completely transcends them at the level of essence. In my opinion, there are two good arguments in favour of this interpretation. First of all, Maximus does not say that these uncreated energies exist by participation in God (the alternative argument that they were not created in time is obviously weaker). Secondly, Maximus does not conceive of them as *hypostasized*, like Proclan mean-terms; hence, they do not destroy divine simplicity (see Larchet 2010; Bradshaw 2010).

If this does not recall Aristotle, it is Maximus' use of the pair 'in potency'–'in actuality' which does so: in the *Ambigua Addressed to John* he writes that the Creator exists always in act, while creatures exist first in potency, as *logoi* in the divine Logos (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1081B). We should be careful, however, not to apply this Aristotelian pair to Maximus' doctrine of grace: 'the grace of deification is totally without relation (ἄσχετος) (p. 142) and has no receptive power (δεκτικὴ δύναμις) of any kind in human nature. If it did, it would no longer be grace but the manifestation of an activity according to some natural power' (*Amb.Io.* 20, PG 91. 1237A). Since Maximus denies

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divine grace (divine energies) any passive potency or potency prior to act in human nature, we should understand that grace bestows both the content (the deification) and the capacity for receiving the content: 'since human nature has not produced the power for grasping what is beyond nature … it is the characteristic of divine grace alone to bestow deification proportionately on created beings (*Q.Thal.* 22, Laga–Steel 1980: 141). Maximus remains silent on how grace confers capacity for its reception: 'the mode itself, according to which God wants to be participated, remains always unrevealed (ἀνέκφαντος) to anybody' (*Cap. XV*.7, PG 90. 1180C). I do not share Gersh's contention that Maximus is ambivalent when at times he writes that the potency to receive grace is an attribute of human nature, and some other times that it is not (Gersh 1978: 210–3). The expression 'τῆς ἐνούσης αὐτοῖς φυσικῆς δυνάμεως' determines κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτόν (*Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1137B) and, together with 'ἐνδεχομένος', recalls the Dionysian notion of analogies, in both senses: analogy according to nature (an angel has different natural powers from a human being) and according to virtue. The expression 'κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν … τῆς αὐτῶν κατὰ φύσιν μεθεκτικῆς δυνὰμεως' refers clearly to the first degree of participation (*Amb.Io*. 42, PG 91. 1329A). In the above quoted passage ('The grace of deification is totally without relation and has no receptive power (δεκτικὴ δύναμις) of any kind in human nature. If it did, it would no longer be grace but the manifestation of an activity according to some natural power', *Amb.Io*. 20, PG 91. 1237A), Maximus explicitly denies any Aristotelian passive potency, and potency prior to act, for grace in human nature. He understands the final deification ('rest' or στάσις) precisely as the cessation (τέλος) of creaturely becoming which is realized through the actualization of natural potencies (*Amb.Io*.15, PG 91. 1220D).

The Soul–Body Relationship

Finally, Maximus' account of the soul–body relationship, initially developed in the anti-Origenistic polemic of *Amb.Io*. 7 (PG 91. 1097D–1101C), cannot be characterized either as Platonic or as Aristotelian, though it has clearly more in common in its overall aspect and structure with Aristotle. Soul and body are necessary parts of the same species (εἶδος) 'human'; as such, they are tied together by a mutual relationship, so that after their coming into existence as a qualitatively distinct individual human being, they can no longer be separated, except in thought (the key element of Maximus' reasoning is the category of relation [σχέσις]). Even after death, the soul does not become an impersonal, separate species, but remains the soul of a certain individual human being: that is why the Origenists are wrong to infer the pre-existence of the soul from its survival after death. Here then Maximus is close to Aristotle's hylomorphism, but with some differences. The soul is not only a form, but some kind of substance (οὐσία), a part (μέρος) of the human species (εἶδος), and as such it survives after the dissolution of the body. This (p. 143) is no anthropological dualism in the radical Platonic sense, in which a human being is a soul using a body (*Alc*. 1, 129C–E), because Maximus *implies* the notion of person—as distinct from the notion of mere soul, mere form, or mere body—when he writes that after a human's birth or creation (γένεσις), the soul and the body pertain to a *certain* human person (thus qualitatively distinct from similar entities—and not only numerically): 'For the soul after the death of the body is no longer called simply soul, but the soul of a human, and the soul of a certain human (τινος ἀνθρώπου) (…) For the body after its separation from soul is no longer called simply body, but the body of a human, and the body of a certain human (τινος ἀνθρώπου) even though it decomposes' (1101B). They will *both* remain the soul and the body *of a certain person* even after death, in virtue of their *eternal* relationship as part of a species (εἶδος) individually qualified.

Maximus is fully aware that the notion of a soul separate from the body runs the risk of some kind of dualism (of Platonic flavour). That is the reason why he underlines that soul and body are not two distinct species (1100D), but form together one species, 'humankind', a *certain* human. If they were two distinct species, then their composition as one individual human, a new species, a *tertium quid*, would be a destruction of what they are; if they form the compound 'human' by a necessity of their nature, they would always do that through an infinite series of reincarnations. In either case, personal identity would be lost. For Maximus, personal identity does matter. Not only will the irrational part (constituted by θυμός and ἐπιθυμία) of the soul enjoy eternal deification (*Car*. 2.48), but so also will the body (*Th.oec*. 2. 88). These are fundamental differences in respect to Aristotle as well as to Platonism.

Conclusions to Maximus' Influences from Aristotle and Platonism

In this chapter I have tried to reconsider Aristotle's influence on Maximus the Confessor. Observing that previous studies made inconclusive (when not ideological) connections between the two authors, I defined the essential

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requirements of a sound method of researching the relationship between two writers: lengthy textual parallels or/and a similar contextualizing of characteristic concepts. My methodological stance is that we have a significantly better chance of understanding the specific interaction of Maximus with other authors—Christian as well as classical philosophers—if we compare the characteristic elements of Maximus' theology, philosophy, and the 'spirit' of his overall vision with the characteristic elements and overall thinking of the authors claimed to have had an impact on him, than if we look only at their casual and disparate language and images.

After briefly recalling some factors that inhibited Aristotle's impact on Maximus (the neo-Platonic commentators transformed Aristotle; the previous church Fathers' tendency to associate Aristotle with heresy; Maximus' doctrine of participation in God and its counterpart in Aristotle—the theology of the Prime Mover), I have discussed (p. 144) those essential features of Maximus' thinking usually traced back to Aristotle: the doctrines of being, motion, energy, and the soul–body relationship. As a result, I conclude that we cannot speak of any direct and significant influence of Aristotle on Maximus. According to the terminology I have defined, Aristotle is no source of Maximus' thinking, but a positive influence from time to time. Maximus' doctrine of being resembles neo-Platonism. His conception of motion as linear and directed to a final end is only formally similar to Aristotle's, its metaphysical background in Maximus being completely different. I have argued that previous scholarship has not paid sufficient attention to the ambivalence of the concept of 'end' or 'cessation' (τέλος) in Maximus, for whom it could mean 'limit' (πέρας), but also 'scope' (σκόπος) or purpose: only the former recalls Aristotle, the latter being more specifically Christian.

Maximus' concept of energy has much more in common with Plotinus and with post-Iamblichean theurgy. Surprisingly, Maximus conceives of the soul–body relationship in terms of personal identity, underlining that, after birth, the soul and the body pertain—as parts of the same species—to a human being, to a certain (thus qualitatively unique) human being; they remain in such relationship even after death, for eternity. In this respect, Maximus goes beyond both Platonism and Aristotle.

However, much work remains to be done in the direction of Maximus' philosophical sources. We are in possession of no systematic analysis of the philosophical and theological connections between Philoponus and Maximus. The essence–energies distinction is the subject of much current debate. Finally, Maximus' Christian *philosophy* should be described in more detail and used creatively in the dialogue of contemporary Christianity with actual issues, especially those concerning human value.[13]

Suggested Reading

Good methodologies for researching the philosophical sources of Christian authors are proposed by Florovsky 1976, Rist 1981, and Rist 1996. Philological studies presenting Maximus' interaction with philosophy are Lackner 1962, Roueché 1974, 1980, and 1990, Madden 1982,Van Deun 2000b, and Mueller-Jourdan 2007. Sorabji 1990 explains the reception of Aristotle by neo-Platonic commentators. Lilla 2006 and Runia 1989 give a general idea of the church Fathers' knowledge and attitude towards Aristotle. Rist 1989 offers a post-Jaeger developmental approach to Aristotle's philosophy, being particularly helpful for establishing what parts of Aristotle's doctrine reached a certain Christian author.

The study of Maximus' philosophical framework should start with Völker 1964, and avoid Sheldon-Williams 1967. A good introduction to Maximus' ontology in general, and of his concept of motion in particular, is Sherwood 1955b; this could be accompanied by Bradshaw 2010. Gersh 1978 highlights Maximus' relationship to neo-Platonism, simultaneously underlining (p. 145) specific differences. For a recent interpretation of Maximus' doctrine of participation, see Portaru 2013.

The concept of 'activity' or 'energy' in Maximus is accurately analysed by Bradshaw 2004 and Larchet 2010. An ecumenical dialogue on the same topic can be found in Athanasopoulos–Schneider 2013. New and relevant interpretations of energy in Aristotle are developed by Beere 2009 and Kosman 2013. The categories of time and space in Maximus are discussed in detail by Mueller-Jourdan 2005. For grace and deification in Maximus the work of reference is Larchet 1996. The best treatment of Maximus' doctrine of the (natural) will and its profound originality in respect to Aristotle is Gauthier 1954.

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Notes:

([1]) See the particularly instructive study of Madden 1982, which shows how Maximus erroneously attributed many definitions of will (θέλησις) to Clement of Alexandria.

([2]) 'In place of a merely temporary world, made for dissolution, such as is suggested in Origen and even—gently—in Ps-Dionysius by the neo-Platonic rhythm of the divine being's radiation and return, *diastole* and *systole, Maximus envisages a naturally lasting cosmos as the supporting ground for all supernatural divinization*. His sense of the dignity of natural beings gives Maximus the key to the decisive objection that can be made against Origenism … Maximus can be considered the most world-affirming thinker of all the Greek Fathers; in his basically positive attitude towards nature he goes even beyond Gregory of Nyssa' (von Balthasar 2003: 61) [italics mine].

([3]) For a critical discussion, see Doucet 1979.

([4]) Sheldon-Williams 1967; Gersh 1978; Plass 1980 and 1984; Perl 1991; Blowers 1991 and 1992; Cooper 2005; Mueller-Jourdan 2005; Törönnen 2007; Tollefsen 2008.

([5]) Lackner 1962: 44–5 proposes a lengthy textual parallelism between Maximus (*Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 20A–B) and David (*Prolegomena philosophiae* 47. 1–2, Busse 1904) on the double opinion; Mueller-Jourdan 2007: xxi–xxvi finds another, more literal, correspondence between the same text of Maximus and Ps-Elias, *Praxis* 17. 16–20 (Westerink 1967). According to Mueller-Jourdan, Ps-Elias should be associated with Stephan of Constantinople (previously Wolska-Conus advanced the theory that the two Stephans and Ps-Elias were one and the same). Moreover, Elias and David are the main source for John of Damascus' *Dialectic*, as is apparent from the *apparatus fontium* in Kotter's edition (1969). As a matter of fact, the *Dialectic* replaced the manuals of philosophy and the *florilegia* of definitions in the Christian world.

([6]) In itself this argument is not sufficient to presume no direct contact at all between Maximus and Aristotle; but it is indeed a good argument to affirm that Maximus could only have seen an Aristotle in need of being either accommodated or rejected.

([7]) Prof. John Rist pointed out to me that both sides blasted their opponents as Aristotelian!

([8]) Aristotle did not actually deny the immortality of the νοῦς, but only of the passive part of the soul. He writes that we do *briefly* enjoy God's way of life, *Met*. 12.7 1072B25. For the development of the implicit recognition of the immortality of the human νοῦς, see also *Eudemian Ethics* 8.2 1248A27 and *An*. 3.8 432A3–14.

([9]) Maximus lists the Aristotelian categories in *Amb.Io*. 10. 39 (PG 91. 1181B). For a detailed analysis of the categories of time and space in Maximus, see Mueller-Jourdan 2005, who argues that Maximus actually employs the neo-Platonic meaning of these categories.

([10]) Maximus often uses the plural, as in *Amb.Io*. 22.

([11]) For motion as desire, see also *Enn*. 3. 9.9.

([12]) Bradshaw 2004; Larchet 2010; Athanasopoulos–Schneider 2013; Lévy 2006; Sherwood 1955b: 159 n.49.

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Marius Portaru

Marius Portaru is a PhD student at the Patristic Institute 'Augustinianum' (Rome).

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The Foundation of Origenist Metaphysics

Pascal Mueller-Jourdan

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[–] Abstract and Keywords

Origenism exerted a strong influence on the spirituality of the Palestinian monasteries in late Antiquity. What should we understand by the generic word 'Origenism' in terms of theoretical contents? Maximus occupies a very important place in the reaction against a metaphysical theory rooted particularly in the *De principiis* of Origen which includes the sources of the *logoi*. The author analyses the doctrine of rational creatures pre-existing before the foundation of the sensible world considered as the consequence of the Fall of pre-existing souls. The beginning of the chapter focusses on a comparison between the critical interpretation of the 'foundation of the world' in the *De principiis* and its radical transformation by Maximus in *Q.Thal.* 60. The interpretation of 'foundation' (καταβολή) by both Origen and Maximus is the key to understanding their radically opposed views of the created sensible world and the status of the human soul.

Keywords: Maximus' sources, Origen, Origenism, metaphysics, logoi, rational creatures, pre-existent souls, the Fall

THIS chapter offers a survey of Origen's great work of speculative theology, *On First Principles (Princ.)*, with a view to finding the roots of Origenist metaphysics. As major contemporary scholars have noticed about the legacy of Origen in late-antique theology, Origenism has to be understood in several ways. The nature of the link between Origenism and Origen himself remains one of the most complex issues of the legacy of the great theologian. Numerous studies of the past decades have tried to map the complex web of concepts and ideas that come from ambiguous issues arising from Origen's *On First Principles*. Because of the importance of such a systematic work and, in particular, the recurrence of some of its major themes in late-antique theological and spiritual controversies, it is useful to explore several basic elements which, at the deepest level, were permanently presupposed among Origenists long after Origen wrote. We shall focus specifically on the primary nature of rational creatures, their Fall, and their restoration to the primitive unity and equality that they lost after the misuse of free will.

In the context of a handbook focussing upon Maximus the Confessor's perspectives on theology and philosophy, we will try to highlight the roots of the *Weltanschauung* of Origenism that Maximus knew. It is not irrational today to admit that Maximus inherited the general cosmic vision of all realities introduced by the original inquiry of *On First Principles*. This innovative investigation, radicalized by Evagrius Ponticus, was critically corrected by the Cappadocians. It offered Maximus the occasion to set out his own *Weltanschauung*. If we can recognize in the metaphysics of Origenism the prime matter of Maximus' cosmic liturgy, particularly the connection between metaphysics and chronological sequences of the general divine economy of Creation, it will be obvious that Maximus effected a radical and orthodox reconfiguration of Origen's metaphysics.

(p. 150) A Systematic Synthesis of Christian Faith

On First Principles is one of the most controversial treatises of ante-Nicene theology. The original Greek document

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disappeared because of its very controversial content. We possess only the Latin translation of Rufinus of Aquileia (*c.*340/5–*c.*410). This is the text received in Latin theological tradition. But this single Latin source is problematic because Jerome (*c.*347–420) charged Rufinus with corrupting the original Greek and proposing a rearrangement of Origen's controversial doctrine. For this reason, we shall leave open discussions about choices made for this presentation of metaphysical themes. We shall be guided by the determination to set out some of the controversial Origenian themes that seem to have been the horizon of Maximus the Confessor's critiques of Origenism.

On First Principles was probably constructed as a sort of general panorama of Christian faith known as the 'apostolic teaching' (*Princ.* 1. Preface):[1]

(1) God, one, 'who created and set in order all things, and who, when nothing existed, caused the universe to be …';
(2) 'Christ Jesus, he who came to the earth, was begotten of the Father before every created thing …';
(3) 'the Holy Spirit is united in honour and dignity with the Father and the Son …';
(4) 'the soul, having a substance and life of its own …', 'every rational soul is possessed of free will and choice …';
(5) the existence of 'the devil and his angels and the opposing spiritual powers';
(6) '… this world which was made and began to exist at a definite time and by reason of its corruptible nature it must suffer dissolution'. Afterwards, Origen raises the issue of what was before and after this world, emphasizing that 'no clear statement on the point is set forth in the church's teaching';
(7) the last point mentioned in the Preface is concerned with the question of divine inspiration of the holy scriptures through the Spirit of God.

The entire project of Origen, in every topic examined, is dominated by the wish to stay in conformity with the scriptures and with the church's faith. However, particularly in *On First Principles*, Origen points out several rational difficulties regarding the Creation, as suggested above. He remarks that the divine scriptures, in many places, indicate that this visible world has a beginning and is expecting an end (cf. *Princ.* 3. 5. 1). For Origen, all visible things were created at a definite time and will remain in their own (p. 151) mode of organization until their last days at another definite time. This visible world has a history. It has now a certain age, as Origen asserts: 'In accordance with our belief in scripture we also calculate how many years old it is' (*Princ.* 3. 5. 3), and its current form will pass away at a definite instant (cf. 1 Cor 7: 31). Consequently, this visible world will have as limited a duration as any living being.

But if such a view is accepted, there arises one of the major notable *aporiae* of the Judaeo-Christian idea of Creation. If the current visible and tangible world has a precise temporal beginning as the book of Genesis attests, what was God doing before the world began? The general inquiry following that question is particularly troubling to deal with. To solve such a problem, Origen says: 'We, however, will give a logical answer that preserves the rule of piety by saying that God did not begin to work for the first time when he made this visible world, but that just as after the dissolution of this world there will be another one, so also we believe that there were others before this one existed' (*Princ.* 3. 5. 3). This logical answer, which for Origen respects the rule of piety, is the starting-point for a more complete *Weltanschauung* presupposed by the theologian. If the condition of existence of this present world has initial and final limits, to avoid imputing limits and weaknesses to God's activity, it is reasonable, or at least not illogical, to suppose that his omnipotence and his beneficence are never without real activity. And if he has to have been always in action, it is also reasonable to suppose an object on which he is always acting. If God is always Creator, Justice and Providence, we can understand the reason for which Origen admitted the possibility of postulating the existence of created entities which always benefit from God's justice and providence (cf. *Princ.* 1. 4. 3–4). Thus, he intellectually conceded the thesis of permanent activity of God before the creation of this concrete world, and also the continuity of his action after the consummation of this current visible world. These first elements allow Origen to investigate the status and condition of the coming world promised by the scriptures. They also allow him to infer the existence of realities before the creation of this current visible world (cf. *Princ.* 3. 5. 3–4). But Origen appears perfectly conscious of the fact that he is engaging in a domain of very sensitive exploration, because, once more, there is no clear statement on this in church teaching (cf. *Princ.* 1. Preface). He mentions the weakness and limitation of human intelligence in such a matter, particularly when people try 'to understand how during the whole of God's existence his creatures have existed also' (*Princ.* 1. 4. 4). Such an issue rouses a 'conflict in our human thoughts and reasoning' (*Princ.* 1. 4. 4) in regard to 'the small and narrow capacity of our mind' (*Princ.* 1. 4. 4). About such an issue, Origen demonstrates great methodological caution when he declares:

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'Now we ourselves speak on these subjects with great fear and caution, discussing and investigating rather than laying down fixed and certain conclusions. For we have previously pointed out what are the subjects on which clear doctrinal statements must be made, and such statements we made, I think, to the best of our ability, when speaking of the Trinity. Now, however, we are dealing, as well as we can, with subjects that call for discussion rather than for definition' (cf. *Princ.* 1. 6. 1).

To encompass the total metaphysical framework presupposed by the theologian, it is appropriate now to divide our investigation into three distinctive phases. The starting-point of the inquiry is this present world, characterized by diversity and variety of essences and modes of existence known through physical phenomena, anthropological (p. 152) and ethnological classifications and also through what holy scripture mentions. The future world, or world to come, is the second step of the study. It is known by revelation in the church and holy scripture. The past world, or world prior to Creation of this current visible world, is the last step of such an investigation. It is known by inference from the end to the beginning.

Metaphysics and History: A Reciprocal Involvement

The starting-point of Origen's system is to note the variety and natural diversity in the world we experience today. This is verified both by empirical observation and by the various names used in scripture to make distinctions among the great diversity of beings and modes of existence (cf. *Princ.* 1. 5. 1–3). The concept of 'world' is ambiguous, and Origen specified its various meanings many times in *On First Principles*, following the well-known Aristotelian method of collecting multiple connotations (πολλαχῶς λεγομένα) of one particular word (cf. *Princ.* 2. 3. 6; for the method, see Aristotle, *Met.* Book Δ). 'World' in scripture has the meaning of 'ornament', for example, in the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 3: 16; 3: 24); 'world' indicates that it is represented on the garment of the high priest (cf. Wisd. 18: 24); it means this earth of ours together with its inhabitants (cf. 1 John 5: 19); it designates this universe which consists of heaven and earth (cf. 1 Cor. 7: 31); we can also find the use of the word when holy scripture speaks about the world that our Lord and Saviour comes from, beyond this visible one (John 17: 14–16; 24), and we find it also in the biblical expression 'before the foundation of the world' (πρὸ καταβολῆ τοῦ κόσμου) which has great significance in the metaphysics of Origen (cf. *Princ.* 3. 5. 4–5). In those sections of the work, Origen admits the possibility of postulating the existence of one world before, and of one world after, this visible world (cf. *Princ.* 3. 5. 3; see also *Princ.* 2. 3. 1). Yet, insofar as we need to start from the current condition of things, in the context of *On First Principles*, Origen affirms that the term 'world' has a comprehensive meaning of 'all that is above the heavens, or in them, or on the earth, or in what are called the lower regions, or any places that exist anywhere; together with the beings who are said to dwell in them. All this is called the world' (*Princ.* 2. 9. 3). In this world, Origen distinguishes various hierarchically ordered forms of beings, from supercelestial beings to infernal powers, as well as earthly creatures; and among these last ones, he finds humans. In each of those levels or conditions of existence, Origen clearly reveals its own internal hierarchy. For example, Origen, following the apostle Paul, notes many ordered differences among heavenly bodies, because, 'There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another in glory' (1 Cor. 15: 41). Such a hierarchy corresponds to astronomical observation and is corroborated by holy scripture. But Origen admits similar hierarchical ordering among (p. 153) rational natures considered as 'celestial', such as the holy angels of God (*Princ.* 1. 5. 1; 1. 5. 3). Their different names attested in Paul's Epistles, as 'thrones or seats, dominions, principalities and powers' (Col. 1: 16), and 'principality, authority, power, dominion' (Eph. 1: 21), seem to confirm that various ordered ranks and functions are attributed to celestial beings in the general economy of this current world.

Under this 'celestial rank' stand the living earthly beings such as humans, rational creatures divided into many categories. For Origen, this rank is attributed to 'those who occupy a middle position between the good and the bad and are still involved in struggle and conflict' (*Princ.* 1. 5. 1). As Origen notes, 'among men, there are no small differences' (cf. *Princ.* 2. 9. 3). Origen then offers a rather full description of classified differences observable among humans: discriminative qualities, dispositions, ways of life, and fortunes or misfortunes. In the category of earthly rational creatures, Origen includes also 'certain invisible powers, to which the management of things upon earth is entrusted; and we must believe that among these, too, no small differences exist, just as is found to be the case among men' (*Princ.* 2. 9. 3).

And finally at the lower level, in following the apostle Paul, Origen intimates that 'there are also certain 'infernal'

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powers (cf. Eph. 4: 9) and among these in like manner a condition of variety must undoubtedly be looked for' (*Princ.* 2. 9. 3).[2]

As far as Origen can observe, this current created world is characterized and dominated by huge diversity and variety of situations, in a cosmic arrangement that distributes places and locations to rational natures for some metaphysical reasons that we shall have to explain later. Indeed, in the current organized world, among rational creatures, some of them appear now as celestial above the earth, some as terrestrial upon the earth, and others as infernal under the earth. In this topography, there is a correspondence between the cosmic plan of the visible reality and the condition of existence of spiritual entities. At this single level, that is the current one, diversity and multiplicity of status are the dominant rule for all created realities, especially for rational creatures (cf. *Princ.* 2. 1. 1). But, for Origen, the question of the genuine nature of each one of them remains open for philosophical[3] and theological reasons (the unity promised at the consummation of the age, such as has been revealed in scripture).

Thus, the second step of the investigation of *On First Principles* will be to compare the current condition of things with what scripture claims about the restoration to unity and the common destiny of those who are now in diversity. For the biblical texts, this is (p. 154) one of the main dimensions of the mission of salvation realized in and by Jesus Christ. The current diversity appears to be an accidental part of a more general plan. At least, such diversity will be superseded by unity at the end of this world when God will be 'all in all'. When the Apostle said that all things will be subjected unto the Son of God and in him unto the Father (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 28), Origen asserts that this means a perfect restoration (ἀποκατάστασις) of the primitive Creation, and finally the reinstatement of rational creatures in their original similarity and equality and in their genuine and natural place, before the foundation of this visible present world (cf. *Princ.* 3. 5. 7–8; 3. 6. 1–9). We should recall that Origenian eschatology remains archaic because the restored nature of rational beings is more or less subject to again losing the unity and stability it has recovered (see *Princ.* 1. 3. 8).

Considering the end as a restoration of a lost status, Origen infers the beginning from that end. Such an inference is emphasized in the first pages of *On First Principles*:

> Seeing, then, that such is the end, when 'all enemies shall have been subjected to Christ', when 'the last enemy shall be destroyed, that is, death', and when 'the kingdom shall be delivered up to God and the Father by Christ, to whom all things have been subjected' (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 24–28), let us, I say, from such an end as this, contemplate the beginning of things. For the end is always like the beginning; as therefore there is one end of all things, so we must understand that there is one beginning of all things, and as there is one end of many things, so from one beginning arise many differences and varieties, which in their turn are restored, through God's goodness, through their subjection to Christ and their unity with the Holy Spirit, to one end, which is like the beginning.
>
> (*Princ.* 1. 6. 2)

Thus to sum up, Origen clearly points out three sequential phases for Creation and particularly for the creation of rational beings: (1) the phase before the foundation of this world; (2) the current phase limited by beginning and end; and (3) the phase after this world at the moment of reinstatement of all things in the lost primitive status of nature. The first is characterized by equality, similarity, unity, and stability of all rational created natures (souls and/or minds). Origen explains the reason for such characteristics of rational natures: 'As therefore he himself [God], in whom was neither variation nor change nor lack of power, was the cause of all that was to be created, he created all his creatures equal and alike, for the simple reason that there was in him no cause that could give rise to variety and diversity' (*Princ.* 2. 9. 6). The second is characterized by huge diversity, but also by multiplicity hierarchically ordered for rational creatures, distributed qualitatively—not in the strict sense ontologically—into celestial, terrestrial, and infernal ranks. The third phase is characterized by the restoration of primitive equality, similarity, unity, and stability for souls and/or minds.

We must note that for Origen, these three distinctive phases, periods, levels, or stages have never coexisted all together at the same time. They are not simultaneous, but appear one after another (see *Princ.* 3. 5. 3).

(p. 155) A Primitive Nature Programmed to Endless Progression

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Such a tripartite chronological framework, which combines historical and metaphysical considerations, appears to be the base of Origenism. But we have to take into account the metaphysical event which explains the 'accidental status' of the intermediate phase where diversity and multiplicity appear to be the general rule for all created beings. If the end appears to be the restoration of beginning, the final consummation of all things is not simply a return to primitive perfection because, before the foundation of this current cosmos, the rational creatures were not created in a definitive, perfect, stabilized mode of being. Indeed, they received—along with primitive, equal, and similar rational substance—free will, which leaves open various prospects in their modality of being.[4] Such an indication leads to the necessity for all rational creatures to maintain themselves in equality and stability, in participating in goodness, which resides essentially in the Trinity alone (cf. *Princ.* 1. 6. 2; 2. 9. 6). Well attested in *On First Principles*, such a theory supposes that the rational creatures have a native natural 'instability' (see *Princ.* 2. 9. 2) and the possibility of moving themselves in a good or bad way. The good way would be respectful of their own substance and the bad a degradation of their mode of being, as Origen clearly asserts: 'But since these rational creatures, as we have frequently shown and will show yet again in its proper place, were endowed with the power of free will, it was this freedom which induced each one by his own voluntary choice either to make progress through the imitation of God or to deteriorate through negligence' (*Princ.* 2. 9. 6).

They have thus the ability, either to progress endlessly in the stability of the divine goodness, or to fall out of its sphere of good and stable influence. That could mean, from a philosophical point of view, that the rational creatures would be naturally characterized by continuous activity and thus by a kind of spiritual movement (i.e. the progress to be made through the imitation of God), because the necessity of securing their stability would be boundless. A comparison with Plotinus' *Enneads* 5. 1. 1 and *Enneads* 6. 9. 8–9 is relevant here. Such a comparison would help to explain the root of the theory of 'perpetual progress' developed by Gregory of Nyssa[5] and its reception, in another context, in the eschatology of Maximus the Confessor, because it points out the infinite and **(p. 156)** inexhaustible goodness of the divinity.[6] In both cases, we can see a transformation of the intuitive directions proposed initially by Origen.

To explain the transition between the first period of the general economy of Creation and the second period—our own time—Origen underlines a word used many times in scripture, 'casting downwards' (καταβολή),[7] as we can read in the following passage:

> Still, there is a point which I do not think we ought to pass by lightly, and that is that the holy scriptures call the foundation of the world by a new and peculiar name, terming it καταβολή. This word is very incorrectly translated into Latin by 'foundation' (*constitutio*), for καταβολή in Greek has rather the significance of casting downwards (*deicere*).
>
> (*Princ.* 3. 5. 4)

Such a problem, when translating Greek into Latin, illustrates an issue met by Latin translators of Origen, such as Rufinus,[8] through whom we now possess a nearly complete Latin version of the Greek text. But such an interpretation of καταβολή was transmitted in late-antique Origenism as a focal point of its metaphysics: in 630, Maximus the Confessor discussed it again in his *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* (*Q.Thal.* 60, Laga–Steel 1990: 73–81). Maximus deals with the Origenist interpretation of the *aporia* raised by part of the verse: 'Christ, as of a pure and spotless lamb, who was foreknown before the foundation of the world, yet manifested at the end of time for our sake' (1 Pet. 1: 19–20). 'By whom was Christ foreknown?' Maximus concludes his critique of the exclusive use of such a verse as follows:

> Indeed, we reject the argument of some who say that Christ was 'foreknown before the foundation (καταβολή) of the world' to those to whom he was later 'manifested at the end of time', as though those beings were themselves present with the foreknown Christ before the foundation of the world, and as though the scriptural Word were running away from the truth and suggesting that the essence of rational beings is coeternal with God.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 60, Laga–Steel 1990: 81, 131–6; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 128)

Origen, focussing on καταβολή to speak about the beginning of this current visible world, interprets it as an indication of the Fall of rational creatures into the thickness and heaviness of corruptible bodies. Such an interpretation is confirmed a few sentences later when he asserts: 'A descent, therefore, of all alike from higher to

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lower conditions appears to be indicated by the meaning of this word καταβολή' (*Princ.* 3. 5. 4). It is probably useful (p. 157) to make clear that Origen does not consider the matter in itself to be a result of the Fall of rational creatures because, for him, matter and/or corporeality is a fundamental and permanent characteristic of created beings (see, for instance, *Princ.* 2. 2. 1).

Spirit/Soul and Matter

'Each spirit or soul, or whatever else rational existences ought to be called' (*Princ.* 2. 1. 2), essentially alike in nature, possessing knowledge and free will, having thus capacity for endless progress in infinite goodness (which resides essentially in God alone) would have been created *in principio* (we mean before the Creation of the world) with a kind of basic measured corporeality or corporeal dimension (cf. *Princ.* 2. 9. 1, interpreting Wisdom 11: 20, 'you have created all things by number and measure'). Indeed, Origen considers that the rational creatures never exist without a certain form of corporeality (cf. *Princ.* 2. 2. 1–2; 2. 3. 1–7), because it would appear that the Trinity alone would be absolutely incorporeal (see *Princ.* 2. 2. 2). Such an assertion, however, is subject to various interpretations because it does not mean that the spirit is by nature corporeal. The proper nature of the spirit, mind, soul, or intellect is incorporeal, as Origen clearly affirms (cf. *Princ.* 1. 7. 1), but it also seems that the rational creatures have always an enmattered existence. However, they seem to have this condition of existence in a *materia prima* which would be single prior to the diversity now visible after their fall. As Origen declares: '[M]aterial substance is of such a nature that it can undergo every kind of transformation. When therefore it is drawn down to lower beings it is formed into the grosser and more solid condition of body and serves to distinguish the visible species of this world in all their variety' (*Princ.* 2. 2. 2). Such an assertion indicates that prime matter (or primitive level of materiality) is neutral from an ethical point of view. It could also mean that prime matter would not be 'material' in the sense in which we use the expression today, but a paradoxical intelligible matter. It seems also reasonable to think that the 'absolute' prime matter is not a consequence of a primitive failure of rational creatures, but simply a basic dimension of the divine Creation from the beginning of created beings' substantial existence. In any case, substantial existence implies limits and thus the possibility of experiencing a sort of repletion. In any case, asking whether God created the prime matter in anticipation of the Fall is a very sensitive question that would require a much more thorough investigation, not only in *On First Principles*, but also in the various forms that Origenism took over the centuries.

Yet, as a consequence of the hypothesis of the permanent material dimension of primitive rational creatures, we have to distinguish clearly between the diverse modes of enmattered existence. The primitive mode, before the foundation of this visible world, would be unique, simple, and undifferentiated. The second and thus the current mode, consequent on the Fall and the Creation of this visible world, brings various degrees of thickness of corporeal texture. It is characterized by various forms of composition. This mode of enmattered existence is generated (i.e. affected by generation and specific (p. 158) movement) and, for some compositions, endures corruption. Nevertheless, such an intermediate mode of enmattered existence seems to be condemned to disappear at the restoration of all things. The third and last level will restore a unique, simple, and common form of enmattered existence, particularly characterized by incorruptibility through the resurrection of Christ. Indeed, the matter of the risen body of Christ will be spiritual (σῶμα πνευματικόν). Such a degree of materiality, according to the rules of inference ('the end is always like the beginning', *Princ.* 1. 6. 2), should be indicative of the primitive degree of measured corporeality (see *Princ.* 2. 9. 1, interpreting Wisd. 11: 20). But such a logical consequence of the beginning as well as the final spiritual (πνευματικόν) degree of corporeality, clearly understood by the first readers of Origen, was probably one of the most controversial issues raised by the inquiry into Creation in this text (cf. *Princ.* 2. 10; Daley 2004: 183–5).

Furthermore, with regards to the Final Judgement and the distribution of rewards and punishments according to the past behaviour of rational creatures, it is difficult to determine if it only indicates an intermediate limited stage before the perfect restoration of all things when God will be all in all, once and for all, or if it means a definitive separation from God. In such a dilemma, it seems Origen shows great methodological caution, particularly in the way he understands the purpose of the punishment, either as a final sanction or as a means of healing (see *Princ.* 2. 10. 4–8).

Clearly, such a theological exploration in *On First Principles* has become a logical system among Origenists. They have given up the methodological caution of Origen who was conscious of dealing with subjects that call for

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discussion rather than for definition (cf. *Princ.* 1. 6. 1).

Rational Creatures (λογικά) and *Logoi*: A Differentiated Consideration

All the themes that have been presented up to this point have not addressed one of the most interesting roots of Origenist metaphysics: the permanence of the preformed pattern of Creation in wisdom. Indeed, to avoid confusion in reading *On First Principles*, it is necessary to distinguish correctly two metaphysical levels of existence of Creation. Origen interprets Psalm 103: 24 ('In wisdom you have made all things') as the making of all things in the only-begotten Son of God assimilated to the ever-existing wisdom. He declares: 'If all things have been made in wisdom [i.e. in the Son of God], then since wisdom has always existed, there have always existed in wisdom, by a pre-figuration and pre-formation, those things which afterwards have received substantial existence' (*Princ.* 1. 4. 5).

According to this brief but crucial assertion, we have to make a clear distinction between the timeless presence of all things in wisdom and their substantial existence. These two levels differentiate the timelessly non-substantial making of the pattern and (p. 159) the substantial Creation in time. The latter is the substantial image of the non-substantial former. In the first stage, all things are distinct, but not separated from wisdom. They are part of it. We can compare such a form of existence with the pre-existence of an artefact's pattern in the craftsman's mind before, but also after, its substantial fulfilment. In the second stage, they have concrete and substantial existence distinct from wisdom. The attribute 'substantial', imputed to the existence of created beings, supposes then a clear distinction between the being of Creation and the being of the uncreated God, which both differ radically in substance. The first stage was already featured a few sentences before: 'In this wisdom, therefore, whoever existed with the Father, Creation was always present in form and outline, and there was never a time when the pre-figuration of those things which hereafter were to be did not exist in wisdom' (*Princ.* 1. 4. 4). All things are always present in God's wisdom. The term 'always' means a mode of existence absolutely outside any consideration of time. It is not just pre-existence, but co-existence or permanent presence of all things in wisdom.

But in the second stage, all things exist also 'in' time and, it is certainly more accurate to say, 'with' time. This is because time is coextensive with Creation as a necessary dimension of it. The fact that rational creatures have knowledge and free will to endlessly progress implies a metaphysical form of temporality due to a certain form of extension. Furthermore, the possibility of explaining the sequence of the economy of Creation in three successive stages, as before, is indicative of such a coextensive dimension, which is however in wisdom as a prefigured form. And, because there was, properly speaking, no time before time, there was no time in which the Creation was not in substance. We could conclude from such reasoning that God is always Creator of created substances. For that reason, it is impossible to date the first Creation, which exists before the creation of this current world, and thus to give it a delimited age, because it appears created 'with' time and not 'at' a certain time. But such a paradoxical view does not mean that created reality is on the same metaphysical level as God. Origen explicitly refutes such a possibility (see *Princ.* 2. 9. 2). Indeed, that could mean that God would also be coextensive with time and thus, as time is coextensive with created realities, that could relegate the divine to the level of Creation by abolishing the gap that Origen clearly establishes between Creator and created substances.

About Substance, Inheritance, and Rupture

We can now see how Maximus inherits various elements of Origen's *Weltanschauung*. Maximus also distinguishes between preformed Creation abiding in God and the substantial Creation coextensive with time (see *Amb.* 10, PG 91. 1164A–D). He establishes the same radical gap between substantially created beings and uncreated God (*Amb.* 10, PG 91. 1180B–1181A). And Maximus accepts, with Origen, the ever-existing pattern of all abiding (p. 160) in God under the forms of multiple *logoi* contained in the *Logos*—one, in a unique and unextended form (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1081B–C), which acquires substantial separated existence at the opportune moment (καιρός), when new individuals, according to the law of generation, appear in time (i.e. in the historical frame). However, though various aspects of the metaphysics presupposed in *On First Principles* emerge in Maximus' thought, he radically differs from the Origenian system in regard to the conception of created substance (οὐσία). We can legitimately assume that the notion of substance in Maximus' works is more influenced by Aristotle's physics than by Plato's theory of souls. Plato's theory seems predominant in Origenism.

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For Origen, the rules and the laws of generation, which order the physical universe, are consecutive to the deviate movement of rational beings away from their original substantial status. Indeed, as we have seen, rational beings pre-exist in substance before the apparition of this world, and this world is the domain of physics characterized by generation, consecutively by movement and change. The variety of substances in the current world, from the angelic ones to the physical ones, is the result both of a collapse of a former mode of existence of substances that are unique, equal, and uniform, and of the anticipated reaction of God, who organizes the second stage of the metaphysical history of the created world. Thus, substance is fundamentally one of the primitive entities. The variety of current substances appears to be accidental, or 'conjunctural'.

For Maximus, generation (γένεσις) is normative for all created entities because, for the unique created world as well as for individual entities that dwell in it, generation is the starting-point or principle of their real existence. The diversity of substances appearing in physics (and beyond in regard to the angelic substances) is accepted from the beginning as an expression of the richness and the abundance of the divine goodness. The particular substance (οὐσία), or primary substance according to Aristotle (*Categories* 5. 2a11–4b19), does not exist before the substantial appearance of one concretely realized new being (τόδε τί) as a form enmattered. Yet, secondary substance, or common substance (*form*/εἶδος), which is not, in the strict sense, separated from individuals, determines a general *ordo rerum* (i.e. the recurrence of the same forms from generation to generation), expressing the transcendent *ordo rerum,* which is permanently present in God in the form of *logoi*. We could consider the secondary or common substance as well as the other general categories as 'transphysical'[9] determinations of all created entities. Generally speaking, for Maximus the concept of substance depends on this Aristotelian background which radically rejects any form of pre-existence for rational beings, a characteristic of Platonism. However, in terms of the status of individuals in Maximus' system, he is also opposed to the Aristotelian doctrine. Indeed, Aristotle admits the post-existence of the soul, once the body has been formed. Against (p. 161) Plato, Origen, and Aristotle, Maximus clearly defends the simultaneity of the creation of soul and body when a new being appears.[10]

For Maximus, there is one unique world, which is destined from its origin to be transfigured by the inexpressible power of the Resurrection (*Th.oec.* 1. 66; *Q.Thal.* 22).

Origen's Four Stages of Creation

I conclude by reconstructing the framework of the metaphysics of *On First Principles* as follows. With regard to Creation, we have to take into account four modal ranks of existence.

The first level is less properly a stage of existence than a stage of pre-existence of the pattern of Creation in wisdom, that is to say, in the Son of God. This level is absolutely stable because the adverb 'always', used to characterize it, means the concomitant and permanent presence of the pattern of all realities in God. At this first level, there is no proper substantial existence. Such realities are not independent creatures but are simply prefigured and pre-determined forms of all things abiding in God's wisdom, such as the *logoi* abiding permanently in the *Logos*. Thus, we do not have a specific created 'nature' beside another radically different nature, an uncreated one. The difference is only in the form, like the project of an architect in his own mind.

The second stage is properly Creation. It is sometimes called 'first Creation', by which we mean the substantial fulfilment of the permanent pre-existing pattern of Creation. At this level, there appears 'with' time a specific created different nature next to the nature of God. Time, in its more general significance, is one of the basic specifications of created nature. At this second level, different from the first, the substance of rational creatures appears similar and equal. They are related to one 'henad' which is a common form of substantial existence that ensures their likeness and unity. Maximus strongly opposes such a theory (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1069A). Rational creatures are characterized by capacity for knowledge, free will, and specifically, a capacity for relation to God from whom they come and acquire substantial specific being. They always have to progress in goodness to maintain themselves in the stability of their own nature. In comparison with the infinity of divine Goodness, it is reasonable to consider such progress as perpetual. Perpetual progress remains an imperative necessity, whatever steps follow. Their misuse of free will and negligence in properly using their own nature provoke a radical collapse of their former mode of being.

Such a downfall is denoted in scripture by the word 'καταβολή'. Maximus contests the Origenist interpretation of

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this term (*Q.Thal.* 60). The existence of free choice before the Creation of the world initiates the third mode of existence, which is the current mode (p. 162) (the physical one) in which we are now. Such a new situation was anticipated by God, who creates our current space–time condition of life in order to classify, hierarchically, primitive minds according to the degree of their failure. The current Creation is not solely a punishment, but the metaphysical consequence of a choice, and perhaps—from a theological point of view—a pedagogical strategy to retrieve the dynamism and progress formerly oriented to goodness and virtue.[11] However, in Origenism, the substance per se of rational creatures does not change. What has changed is the general condition of existence, engaging all creatures in the necessity to restore the primitive mode of being in conformity to the real nature of things, which is referred to as the permanent pattern and pre-configuration of all things in God's wisdom. The current mode of being must be considered to be 'accidental'. It has limited duration because it has a beginning in time and a pre-announced end. At the end of this stage, it will have a fixed age.

There is a fourth stage of existence in which all Creation, and potentially all rational creatures, will be totally restored to their proper nature. Such a restoration is the result of the divine Incarnation of the Son of God, his death, and his resurrection. This new condition will be marked by the necessity of recovering primitive perpetual progress. But the whole system remains fragile because the free will of rational creatures will not be annihilated. The possibility remains of a later misuse of it and, thus, the possibility of re-opening a new stage in this historical framework. The undeveloped eschatology of Origenism, based more on a Platonic than a biblical background, as well as the unstable mode of being of rational creatures' substance, provoked long-standing controversies among the theologians of Late Antiquity.

Suggested Reading

For a more developed interpretation of the philosophical influences on Maximus, see Mueller-Jourdan 2005.

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(p. 163) Maximus, *Q.Thal., Th.oec.* Origen, *Princ*.

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Notes:

([1]) All references to *Princ.* are from the SC edition of Crouzel–Simonetti (1978a–1984); all translations are my own.

([2]) In this survey, Origen leaves aside the case of other living beings such as 'dumb animals and birds and creatures that live in water, it seems superfluous [for him] to inquire about them, since it is certain that they should be regarded as of contingent and not primary importance' (*Princ.* 2. 9. 3; see also 2. 1. 1).

([3]) It is well known that for the major philosophical and theological systems of antiquity, based on a paradigm clearly expressed in Pythagoreanism, unity is always prior to multiplicity, and simplicity always prior to diversity and complexity. This is also the major theme of Plotinus' *Enneads*, and is called 'the principle of prior simplicity'. For the explanation of such a principle in Plotinus, see O'Meara 1993: 33–8.

([4]) Compare with Plotinus, *Enn.* 5. 1. 1 (MacKenna–Page 1930: 369): 'What can it be that has brought the souls to forget the father, God, and, though members of the Divine and entirely of that world, to ignore at once themselves and It? The evil that has overtaken them has its source in self-will, in the entry into the sphere of process, and in the primal differentiation with the desire for self-ownership. They conceived a pleasure in this freedom and largely indulged their own motion; thus they were hurried down the wrong path, and in the end, drifting further and further, they came to lose even the thought of their origin in the Divine.'

([5]) For instance: *In Cant.* 8, Langerbeck 1960: 245–6; with regard to perfection and progress, compare the preface of *Vita Moysis* 1. 5 and 2. 219–48 (Daniélou 1968); see also Blowers 1992.

([6]) For instance in *Q.Thal.* 59 (Laga–Steel 1990: 130–3): 'Repletion of desire is the ever-moving rest around the desirable of the ones who desire. Ever-moving rest is the continuous and never-ending enjoyment of the desirable.'

([7]) For the use of καταβολή in the New Testament, see Matt. 13: 35; 25: 34; Luke 11: 50; John 17: 24; Eph. 1: 4; Heb. 4: 3; 9: 26; 1 Pet. 1: 20; Rev. 13: 8; 17: 8.

([8]) See, for instance, the intense polemic between Rufinus and Jerome about the interpretation of καταβολή appearing in Eph. 1: 4 ('He has chosen us before the foundation of the world'). See Jerome's *Apology for Himself Against the Books of Rufinus* 1. 22.

([9]) This technical expression does not issue from Maximus, nor from Origen, but from Thomas Aquinas (*Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Prologue). It indicates general things which transcend the physical order.

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([10]) *Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1100C–D; *Amb.Io.* 42, PG 91. 1321D–1324A.

([11]) In *Princ.* 3. 6. 1, Origen compares the 'highest good' of Plato's *Theaetetus* (Duke et al. 1995: 176b), i.e., the becoming as far as possible like God, with the biblical text where we find people made in the image of God radically oriented to attain perfect likeness with God.

Pascal Mueller-Jourdan

Pascal Mueller-Jourdan is professor of Ancient Philosophy at the Catholic University of the West, Angers, France.

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The Ascetic Tradition

Marcus Plested

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Abstract and Keywords

It is unquestionable that Maximus' own experience of ascetic life and immersion in ascetic literature profoundly shaped his theological vision and endeavour. This chapter attempts to remain alive not only to specific texts that impressed themselves on Maximus but also to the whole monastic orientation of his life's work. Plested considers the impact of sources such as Diadochus of Photice, the Macarian writings, the desert Fathers, the Gaza ascetics, and Evagrius of Pontus. His interaction with such sources will be dealt with in terms both of specific connections and overarching synthesis. Attention will be paid to the ascetic genre of much of Maximus' work (for example, the 'centuries' format). Some attempt will also be made to indicate in what manner his ascetic foundations helped determine some of his principal theological positions.

Keywords: Diadochus of Photice, the Macarian writings, the desert Fathers, the Gaza ascetics, Evagrius of Pontus, centuries

IT is inadequate and potentially misleading to speak of the ascetic tradition as an 'influence' on Maximus the Confessor. The term 'influence' conventionally betokens a more or less passive adoption of external ideas, concepts, and intellectual frameworks—much as one might succumb to the dreaded *influenza*, or 'flu'. The ascetic traditions of the Christian East constitute, rather, the indispensable and inescapable foundation of the Confessor's life, work, and teaching. There is nothing in Maximus' oeuvre that is not grounded in lived monastic experience, not animated by the vast and rich ascetic legacy of the Christian East. It is even somewhat problematic to speak of Maximus' 'reception' of the ascetic tradition in that this was precisely the tradition by which he was embraced, formed, and governed—in other words, by which he himself was received. If we must speak of influence or, better, reception, we should acknowledge that Maximus' appropriation and assimilation of and by the ascetic tradition constitutes the *sine qua non* and *non plus ultra* of his theological achievement.

Latin tags aside, all this underlines the importance of recognizing the ascetic and monastic character of Maximus' work as a whole. Dogmatic theology is not, for Maximus, a discrete discipline separable from monastic experience and ascetic effort. Even the deepest and darkest corners of his explorations of the gnomic will of Christ can scarcely be satisfactorily explained without recourse to the ascetic dimension of his thought.

In order to flesh out the nature of this ascetic dimension, and to give substance to some of the affirmations made above, two main areas will be explored. The first is perhaps the most obvious, pertaining to Maximus' reception of specific ascetic sources, most notably Evagrius of Pontus, Macarius-Symeon or Ps-Macarius (hereafter simply Macarius), Diadochus of Photice, and Mark the Monk. It is one of the chief glories of Maximus that he unites in a creative synthesis all of what Irénée Hausherr once christened, in a bout of exuberant categorization, the 'grands courants' of Eastern Christian spirituality (Hausherr 1935). But such connections are really but the tip of the iceberg. The ascetic (p. 165) dimension of Maximus' work is also evident, and perhaps more profoundly so, in the very form and character of his teaching and writing. We shall start with this second area of enquiry.

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Perhaps the most vital component of the ascetic tradition of the Christian East is the emphasis on the relationship between the spiritual father (or mother) and disciple. The *Apophthegmata patrum* serve as the archetypical embodiment of this pattern, providing numerous pithy and inimitably vivid illustrations of the relationship, frequently introduced by the phrase 'Abba, give me a word that I might be saved'. Closely related to this tradition of eldership is the genre of question and answer, or *eratopokriseis*, in which an acknowledged ascetic guide offers responses to ad hoc questions relating to the monastic life. Examples of this format can be found in Basil the Great, Macarius-Symeon, and Barsanuphius and John of Gaza. Maximus is certainly to be located within this tradition of monastic pedagogy. This is perhaps most evident in *LA*, couched as a dialogue between a novice and an elder on the best means of achieving perfection within the monastic life. But this form of pedagogy is also apparent in more expansive and wide-ranging works such as the *Q.Thal.* and *Amb*. While such works certainly partake of the classical form of the scholia (short commentaries on difficult portions of Homer and other writers), they go beyond that form by taking difficult passages in scripture and the Fathers as a springboard for the articulation and inculcation of a distinctive spiritual pedagogy and theological vision. Other works of exegesis (*Or.dom.* and *In ps. LIX*) and indeed his magnificent liturgical commentary, the *Mystagogy*, share in this tradition of monastic pedagogy. The same may be said of many of his occasional pieces relating to the monothelite controversy. In all these works, which together make up the bulk of his oeuvre, Maximus is functioning above all as a spiritual father or guide, patiently responding to the questions presented to him in order to guide, train, and form. As a good spiritual father, Maximus responds not from his own storehouse of knowledge, nor in the interests of a speculative or systematic theology, but as the mouthpiece or voice of tradition, articulating received truth in the twin interests of orthodoxy and ascetic perfection.

The monastic character of Maximus' work is also displayed in his enthusiastic adoption of the century format. While Stoic in origin, the century format became indelibly associated with monastic wisdom through the labours of Evagrius of Pontus, Diadochus of Photice, and others. The century format consists of short sentences or paragraphs, grouped into hundreds, encapsulating a single thought or theme and intended for slow, prayerful, and meditative digestion. Maximus employs the format in his *Car.* and *Th.oec.* In such works Maximus' sense of the perfect unity of monastic and theological endeavour is at its most apparent.

We turn now to some of the specifics of Maximus' reception of the ascetic traditions of the Christian East, beginning with Evagrius of Pontus. Evagrius' impact on Maximus has long been acknowledged, most notably in the wake of Marcel Viller's seminal article (Viller 1930). Viller argued that Maximus owes all the essentials of (p. 166) his spiritual teaching not to Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite or Gregory of Nazianzus, but to Evagrius, from whom he has 'toute l'ossature de son système'. With the focus very much on the *Car.*, Viller maintained that Maximus owes to Evagrius the tripartite conception of the soul (νοῦς, θύμος, ἐπιθυμία) and the tripartite division of the spiritual life (πρακτική, θεωρητική, and θεολογία), with many points of contact at each stage, beginning with faith and culminating in the stripping of the intellect and the attainment of pure prayer and true theology: the knowledge of the Holy Trinity. He also saw a tangible debt in Maximus' teaching on the virtues and vices, love, knowledge, πάθος, and ἀπάθεια. In short, Viller claimed that Maximus inherited both the basic structure and much of the detail of his teaching from Evagrius.

There is some truth in all this. Maximus has patently drawn a good deal from the Evagrian tradition, albeit largely on the level of form, not of substance. Viller did not, however, make sufficient allowance for the extent to which Maximus substantially reworked his Evagrian inheritance, nor did he pay sufficient attention to the mediation of Evagrius through other writers; still less did he allow for other important sources used by Maximus. A useful illustration of Maximus' freedom and originality with regard to Evagrius comes in what may plausibly be presented as a re-working of *On Prayer* 60 ('If you are a theologian, you will pray truly. And if you pray truly, you are a theologian'). Maximus, for his part, declares: 'The one who truly loves God prays entirely without distraction. And the one who prays entirely without distraction, loves God truly.' (*Car.* 2. 1, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 50). Here it is love rather than theology that is established as the chief criterion of properly ordered prayer, and a personal encounter of the whole person with God substituted for the intellect's contemplation of the divine Trinity. Maximus also differs substantially from Evagrius in his understanding of the passions. Evagrius regards the passions as entirely negative and prefers to call for their eradication rather than for their transformation, for ἀπάθεια over μετριοπαθεία, while Maximus has a rather more sanguine approach. In *Centuries on Love* he does, to be sure, define passion (some manuscripts read 'blameworthy passion') in a purely negative way, as 'an impulse of soul contrary to nature' (*Car.* 2. 16, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 96), but in the *Ambigua* he offers a broader and more

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considered definition of passion as 'motion from one [state] to another, having for its end the impassible' (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1072B). This broader interpretation of passion refers not to the decay of the powers of the soul, but rather to the natural passibility of all things within the sphere of becoming (PG 91. 1073B). The passions, in this more sanguine analysis, are not evil in themselves but only become so by misuse and misorientation. They too have a legitimate and proper part to play in the spiritual life (*Q.Thal.* 1, Laga–Steel 1980: 47–9). Maximus also draws a distinction between natural and counter-natural passions: the former being healthy and the latter reprehensible (*Q.Thal.* 21, Laga–Steel 1980: 127). It is the counter-natural passions that divide soul and body (*Q.Thal.* 62, Laga–Steel 1990: 131), exercise tyranny over us (*Car.* 2. 30, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 106), and corrupt our nature (*QD* 63, Declerck 1982: 49). These passions may properly be called 'alien passions' (*Q.Thal.* 51, **(p. 167)** Laga–Steel 1980: 405) and must be killed (*Car.* 4. 54, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 216). It is these that God wishes to destroy, not the natural movements or passions of the soul (*QD* 69, Declerck 1982: 53). Maximus speaks at length of the transformation (*Q. Thal.* 27, Laga–Steel 1980: 197) and recapitulation (*Q.Thal.* 47, Laga–Steel 1980: 321) of the passions. The counter-natural passions must be put back into accord with nature, harnessed to power our journey towards God. This rather more positive approach to the passions is just one of many substantial differences between Maximus and Evagrius missed by Viller.

Viller's arguments have never been admitted in their totality but have nonetheless proved massively influential, marking Maximus as a decidedly Evagrian thinker for years to come. The endurance of the close association with Evagrius doubtless also owes much to Irénée Hausherr, who enthusiastically propagated the connection in his article, 'Ignorance infinie' (1936), categorically asserting the greater influence of Evagrius over that of the Areopagite. This was to place Maximus firmly in Hausherr's Evagrian or intellectualist tradition of Eastern Christian spirituality, a tradition he starkly opposed to the Macarian or affective tradition. Works such as these, while not without some nuance, tended to give the impression that Maximus was little more than a compiler of ascetic traditions of the past, with the emphasis squarely on the Evagrian dimension of that compilation. Contributions by Myrrha Lot-Borodine (1933) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1941) did much to correct such an impression, crediting Maximus with some originality and treating him rather more as a synthesizer of earlier traditions than as a mere compiler. Polycarp Sherwood (1955b) demonstrated with great care and cogency the very great degree to which Maximus corrected and even refuted Evagrius in his *Ambigua Addressed to John*. Irénée-Henri Dalmais (1966) may also be credited with prompting reconsideration of the primacy of the Evagrian dimension in Maximus. Regretting the widespread currency given to Viller's 'massive affirmations', he questioned whether Maximus' underlying orientation was not, in fact, radically different. On Dalmais' heels a small cluster of younger Dominicans followed, expanding on the precise nature of Maximus' other ascetic orientations. These pointed especially to the potential impact of Macarius, mediated to some extent by Diadochus of Photice. Juan-Miguel Garrigues (1976: 121–3) detected a distinct Macarian influence in Maximus' understanding of the synergy of divine and human wills and in his approach to the baptismal mystery. Similarly, Alain Riou (1973: 39–40) observed that it was the Macarian current of spirituality (with its emphasis on baptismal grace, divine–human synergy, the primacy of love, and the prayer of the heart) that gave Maximus the ability to integrate and synthesize Origen and the Areopagite. More recently, Jean-Claude Larchet (1996: 12, 678) has argued that the Macarian tradition played a key role in Maximus' critique of Origenism. Accepting, on the level of form at least, that the *Centuries on Love* are strongly marked by Evagrius, he argues that in fact they correct his teaching very sharply and that his influence is duly counterbalanced by that of Macarius, Diadochus, and Mark the Monk. Larchet also cites Macarius as one of the principal precursors of Maximus' understanding of free will and of the divine and deifying character of the light witnessed in prayer **(p. 168)** (1996: 140, 510). None of these studies, however, was able to substantiate fully the intuition of a distinctly Macarian dimension of the Maximian synthesis.

We turn now to Macarius. The connection between Macarius and Maximus is immediately apparent in their respective treatments of the Transfiguration, as observed by Louth (1996) and Staats (1997). Maximus deals with the Transfiguration principally in *QD* 190–2, *Amb.Io.* 10, and *Th.oec.* 1. 97 and 2. 37–8. In *QD* 190 (Declerck 1982: 132) Maximus links the Transfiguration squarely with our resurrection: 'Thus [Christ] glorified the assumed humanity so that just as he, being in a passible body, was seen transfigured upon the mountain, so also, receiving an incorruptible body, shall we be in the resurrection.' This is a connection also made by Macarius, who takes the Transfiguration as paradigmatic of the revelation of inner glory in the outward body at the resurrection (*Hom.* 15. 38). Furthermore, Maximus speaks of the interiorization of the mystery of the Transfiguration within those held worthy of such an experience (*Th.oec.* 1. 97, 2. 15), another striking theme also prominent in Macarius (*Vat.graec.coll.* 10. 3. 1–2; *Hom.* 4. 11–13). *Amb.Io.* 10 presents the apostles' ascent of Tabor as primarily an

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inward and ascetic ascent: 'And they passed over from flesh to spirit, before they had laid aside this fleshly life, by the change in the operations of sense that the Spirit worked in them, lifting the "veils of the passions" from the intellectual power that was in them' (*Amb*. 10. 17, PG 91. 1125D–1128A). For Macarius too, the divine light is experienced by means of the spiritual senses, and also only when freed by the Spirit from the darkening 'veil of the passions'.[1] Maximus goes on to assert the infinite and uncreated character of the light of the Transfiguration: 'by essence beyond ineffability and unknowability and countlessly raised beyond all infinity' (*Amb*. 10. 31, PG 91. 1168A). And it is this same light that is witnessed in pure prayer: 'the intellect is ravished by the divine and infinite light and is aware neither of itself nor of any other created thing whatsoever, but only of the one who through love has activated such radiance in it' (*Car.* 2. 6, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 92). This emphasis on the ecstatic experience of the divine light places Maximus squarely within the tradition of Macarius, the most insistent and expansive expositor of the theology of the divine light in the early church and the *fons et origo* of the later hesychast development of that tradition.[2]

Closely related to the theme of the extension of the mystery of the Transfiguration is that of the Incarnation of the Word in the souls of the worthy. Here again Maximus picks (p. 169) up a prominent Macarian theme. Maximus speaks of God's desire 'to become incarnate in the worthy' (*Q.Thal.* 22, Laga–Steel 1980: 143. 103–4) and famously proclaims that 'the Word of God [who is] God wishes eternally to operate the mystery of his embodiment in all things' (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1084CD). 'God', he says, 'gives Godself to each as the soul [gives itself] to the members of the body' (*Q.Thal.* 61, Laga–Steel 1990: 105. 328–33). Macarius had also given great emphasis to this theme of divine embodiment, also expressing it by means of an analogy with the body–soul relationship. He marvels at the fact that: 'The infinite, inaccessible, and uncreated God has embodied Godself through infinite and incomprehensible bounty and has, so to say, reduced Godself from inaccessible glory so that God might unite Godself to the invisible creations (I mean the souls of saints and of angels), granting them the capacity to participate in the life of the Divinity.' Macarius goes on to outline the way in which the soul has enveloped all the bodily members and senses, declaring that: 'In the same way, the infinite and inconceivable God in God's bounty has reduced Godself from inaccessible glory and has put on the members of this body and enveloped it; and through clemency and love for humanity God transfigures Godself, embodies Godself, mingles Godself with and envelops holy, pleasing, and faithful souls' (*Hom.* 4. 9–10).

What is perhaps most striking in all this is that we have in Maximus a version of the intriguing, unusual, and controversial Macarian concept of the 'second soul'. Macarius makes this one of his master themes.[3] In effecting the mystery of his Incarnation in holy souls: '[God] becomes, so to say, a soul in the soul and a hypostasis in the hypostasis, so that the soul can live in the divinity, sense immortal life, and become a partaker of incorruptible glory, if it is worthy of and pleasing to God' (*Hom.* 4. 10). Maximus takes up this distinctive theme, writing of Dionysius and Gregory of Nazianzus that they have realized the essence of the soul and thereby attained the living Christ, or rather Christ 'has become a soul in their soul' (*Amb.Th.*, Prologue, PG 91. 1033A). It is difficult not to hear in passages such as this an echo of Macarius' characteristic second soul theme. Furthermore, the fact that Maximus uses the theme, and indeed the soul–body analogy, in the context of the embodiment of the Logos in the saints, leads to the conclusion that he is here consciously developing and unfolding specifically Macarian themes.

The understanding of baptism represents one of the most fundamental connections between Macarius and Maximus. This connection, particularly between two texts (Macarius' *Vat.graec.coll.* 43 and *Q.Thal.* 6), was noted in Le Guillou (1974). It has since been taken up by Garrigues (1976: 45 n.10), Riou (1973: 39), and Blowers (1991: 6). In *Q.Thal.* 6, Maximus answers a question concerning the apparent paradox between the fact of post-baptismal sin and statements such as 1 John 3: 9, 'Whoever is born of God (p. 170) does not commit sin'. Maximus' careful response is as follows: 'The mode of birth from God is double to us. One gives all the grace of filial adoption present in potential to those who are born; the other makes it entirely present in act, transforming the free choice of the one that is born towards God who has begotten him' (*Q.Thal.* 6, Laga–Steel 1980: 69. 8–13).[4] This second mode of birth is the work of the Spirit, co-operating with the human will in order to make manifest and actual the hidden grace laid down at baptism. Maximus even goes so far as to argue that those who have had experience (πεῖρα) of this process of revelation, this second birth, will not fall, observing that 'those who are born of the Spirit have their free will entirely seized' and are 'rendered clearly impeccable' (*Q.Thal.* 6, Laga–Steel 1980: 69. 28–71. 36). Baptism has this two-fold character precisely to bring into play human free will. In this sense, baptismal grace is to be understood as a pledge: 'The pledge of all good things and of eternal life is the grace given in baptism, of which we become partakers by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' (*QD* 2. 9, Declerck 1982: 167).

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Maximus is here drawing upon the baptismal teaching developed by Macarius in the context of the nascent Messalian controversy of the late fourth century. Defending baptism against the prevailing anti-sacramentalism (or at least indifference to the sacraments) of the Messalian tendency, while simultaneously rejecting any suggestion that baptism confers grace and sanctification regardless of human disposition and effort, Macarius pioneered a two-fold schema that was to have substantial posterity. Baptism, according to Macarius, confers the 'beginning of the life of the Spirit', a life which becomes manifest in proportion to the practice of the virtues (*Vat.graec.coll.* 43. 2). Baptismal grace is, furthermore, 'the perfect pledge of the coming inheritance' (*Hom.coll.* 3, 28. 3. 2; cf. Eph. 1: 14). Macarius explains that the grace of the Holy Spirit operates with such subtlety that it is initially 'neither known nor grasped' (*Vat.graec.coll.* 43. 6). This grace is manifested only slowly (*Vat.graec.coll.* 43. 5), until such time as 'active grace' (*Vat.graec.coll.* 25. 1. 9) is experienced. Grace operates in this double manner in order to embrace the self-determining free will of human beings (*Ep.mag.* 2. 5). Only in this way does one grow in communion with grace to the perfect measure of a human being, 'which is the total liberation from passions and the active and complete inhabitation of the Holy Spirit' (*Vat.graec.coll.* 25. 2. 5).

The accounts are fundamentally symphonous. Baptism has a two-fold character so as to allow the exercise of human free will and this necessarily entails the possibility of post-baptismal sin. Both Macarius and Maximus, however, hold out the possibility of such a perfect conjunction of free will and grace as to produce functional impeccability. Macarius is, if anything, more cautious on this point, consistent with his position as a reformer of the Messalian tendency. This two-fold schema also neatly precludes the confusion of the presence of grace with the sensation thereof—the classic error alleged of the Messalians. There are, in short, compelling grounds for treating Maximus' (p. 171) baptismal teaching as a development of Macarius, particularly in respect to the passive/active dynamic. This connection is doubtless to some degree indirect, being mediated through Diadochus of Photice and Mark the Monk, the authors chiefly responsible for establishing Macarius' intuition of the double character of baptism as a standard feature of church teaching on the topic (Plested 2004: 81–90, 152–6).

For both Macarius and Maximus this two-fold schema of baptism allowed for emphasis on *both* grace *and* freedom in the best Eastern Christian tradition of *synergeia*. Human beings are called upon to exercise their free will precisely so as to reveal and to experience the grace conferred at baptism. This accent on experience (πεῖρα) serves to open up a further demonstration of connection between Maximus and Macarius. Macarius is indubitably the doctor of experience par excellence within the Eastern Christian tradition, regarding spiritual experience of both good and evil as an inescapable and even necessary feature of the Christian life.[5] Maximus speaks of experience upwards of thirty times in his writings, for example the experience of evil (*Car.* 2. 67, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 126), the experience of divine power (*Car.* 2. 39, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 112), and the experience of re-birth in the Spirit (*Q.Thal.* 6, Laga–Steel 1980: 69, 71; Miquel 1966: 355–61). His appeal to experience associates him closely with the experiential tradition of Macarius and Diadochus of Photice (Plested 2004: 14–44). The importance of this tradition within Maximus' theology is particularly evident in his understanding of the experiential character of knowledge. He distinguishes two types of knowledge: 'One is relative, lying in word and concepts alone, and does not have active perception through experience of the object of cognition … The other, properly true, confers perception by participation of the whole of the object of cognition in active experience alone, without [recourse to] word and concepts' (*Q.Thal.* 60, Laga–Steel 1990: 77. 63–9). True knowledge is participatory knowledge, knowledge gained through the unmediated experience and perception of the thing which is known. Such knowledge suppresses relative, discursive knowledge about the said thing (Laga–Steel 1990: 74–86). Maximus defines experience as 'this active knowledge which comes about beyond all thought' (Laga–Steel 1990: 87–8) and perception as 'experience by participation of supernatural good things', or 'this participation in the object of cognition [that comes about] beyond all conception' (Laga–Steel 1990: 81–2, 88–90). The emphasis throughout is upon the immediate apprehension of the thing known. This experiential epistemology is very much what we find in the Macarian tradition (Plested 2004: 134–40).

For Macarius, God is known only by experience of him, not by merely rational and discursive means, but directly, in the heart (*Vat.graec.coll.* 5. 2. 7). He makes very clear his exasperation with merely rational theology, theology that depends upon worldly wisdom and not upon the inspiration of the Spirit (*Hom.coll.* 3, 16. 3. 3). Knowledge of the mysteries of the Spirit comes about by experience and immediate perception (αἴσθησις) (p. 172) (*Vat.graec.coll.* 50. 2. 1). The apostles, prophets, and martyrs, for example, experience divine love and goodness: 'not in word only, or in mere knowledge, but in word and in act through [experience of] these very things' (*Hom.* 37. 2). Maximus likewise uses 'perception' (αἴσθησις) to denote understanding (*QD* 78, Declerck 1982: 59) and in

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reference to the spiritual senses (*QD* 43, Declerck 1982: 36–7; cf. Macarius *Vat.graec.coll.* 58. 3. 3). The most interesting example for our purposes is Maximus' reference to the faculty of intellectual or spiritual perception (αἴσθησις νοερά):

> The Word enables us to participate in divine life by making itself food, as those who have received from the Word this intellectual perception (αἴσθησις νοερά) know. It is by the taste of this food that they truly know in full knowledge that the Lord is good.
>
> (*Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 34. 128–32)

The deeply experiential dimension of the Maximian synthesis is firmly rooted in the Macarian–Diadochan tradition, most notably in respect to its epistemology. Furthermore, to express the experience of grace, Maximus uses the term 'plenitude' (πληροφορία). This has been noted by von Balthasar (1941: 65 n.1) and picked up by des Places (1982: 34–5). Maximus uses the term in reference to exegesis, signalling the 'plenitude of heart' (ἡ τῆς καρδίας πληροφορίας) that gives rise to the 'higher and true intelligence' necessary to probe and untangle the difficulties of scripture (*Q.Thal.* intro., Laga–Steel 1980: 23. 96–8). He also declares that: 'The word of grace was preached … to human beings to give them full assurance to confess (πληροφορῶν ὁμολογεῖν) that the one God is the Creator and Judge of all' (*Q.Thal.* 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 203. 258–9). As Columba Stewart (1991: 100) has observed, the use of the verb πληροφορέω as an active transitive, in the sense of 'to convince, to satisfy', is a usage pioneered by Macarius.

The experiential dimension discussed in the preceding sections brings us to the locus of spiritual experience, that is to say, the heart. In focussing on the heart in this manner, Maximus allies himself far more obviously with Macarius than with any other ascetic source. He even takes up the distinctively Macarian metaphor of 'working the earth of the heart'. The metaphor is not a commonplace and, in Greek writings, is directly related to the Macarian tradition (Plested 2004: 154 n.). Furthermore this is not an isolated instance in the works of Maximus.[6] *QD* 17 (Declerck 1982: 36–40) is a particularly striking example, where Maximus exhorts his readers to take up the plough of the Logos in order to 'cut open the stones of the heart, to root out the tares of the passions, and open up the earth of the heart to receive the divine Logos'.

It is undeniable that Maximus allots to the heart a far richer and more profound function than can be discerned in Evagrius, or for that matter Dionysius, both of whom tend to privilege the human intellect (νοῦς). The heart is very much the centre of the human person in Maximus as in Macarius, the seat of the intellect, and the locus (p. 173) of the spiritual experience.[7] Perhaps the most arresting parallel here is Maximus' reference to hearing certain accusations 'in the hidden workshop of the heart' (*Q.Thal.* 62, Laga–Steel 1990: 135. 331), a phrase that almost certainly originated with Macarius (Plested 2004: 28–9). Maximus' appropriation of the Macarian understanding of the place of the heart enabled him to balance within his synthesis the primacy of the intellect found in Evagrius. He has, as it were, grounded Evagrian spirituality in the earth of a Macarian heart. While we may acknowledge with Viller a broadly Evagrian structure or skeleton, the flesh and blood of Maximus' ascetic teaching are decidedly Macarian in character.

Diadochus of Photice and Mark the Monk are to some extent synthesizers of Macarius and Evagrius, Diadochus' synthesis being rather more far-ranging and thoroughgoing. Much of what comes to Maximus from Evagrius and Macarius was certainly mediated through Diadochus and Mark. Mark's impact on Maximus is difficult to pin down or distinguish from that of Macarius. There are, however, areas in which Maximus appears to have drawn directly on Diadochus, who is more than once given the rare honour of an explicit citation, one notable reference (*DP* 28, PG 91. 301C; cf. *Opusc.* 26, PG 91. 277C) being to his *Cap.* 5 with its definition of self-determination as 'the power of a deiform soul to direct itself by deliberate choice towards its object'. There are also potential connections to be made with *Cap.* 2 (the nature of God), 9 (distinction between 'knowledge' and 'wisdom'), 11 (silence), 14 (journeying to God), 16–17 (varieties of fear), 33 (dank sweetness), and 86–7 (educative desolation) (des Places 1982). In the *Questions and Doubts*, Maximus devotes a whole scholion (*QD* 1. 9, Declerck 1982: 142–3) to Diadochus' assertion in *Cap.* 100 that those who feel fear at the hour of their death will be 'tried by the fire of judgement'. Maximus may also have picked up (in *Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 47. 350) a reference to the smoothness of pleasure operating through sense perception made by Diadochus in *Cap.* 79.

In sum, Maximus has certainly drawn deeply on certain ascetic writers—most notably Macarius, Evagrius, and Diadochus—but his achievement is in no way reducible to these or any other sources. It would also be a mistake to

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suppose that Maximus' synthesis of earlier ascetic traditions was solely or even largely a matter of *written* sources. Much of this teaching would have come to him through oral tradition, through the teaching of his own spiritual elders, above all Sophronius (on whom see Allen 2015). This teaching would also have been digested in the context of prayer, liturgical and mystical experience, and robust ascetic effort—all vastly important facets of Maximus' make-up and mindset to which we are scarcely privy. Maximus read, listened to, and acted upon earlier monastic teachings, not as voices from the past but as fellow members of a living chorus or symphony, fellow strugglers (p. 174) in the same ascetic arena. It is this sense of synchronicity and solidarity that underpins the properly original nature of the Maximian synthesis. Drinking deeply from the sources, Maximus has produced a creative and embodied affirmation of living tradition that is very much his own.

Suggested Reading

An expanded version of the central section on Maximus' ascetic sources (with special reference to Macarius) is presented in Plested 2004: 213–54. Viller 1930 remains the classic treatment of Maximus' debt to Evagrius. Miquel 1966 (reprised in Miquel 1989: 120–7) is excellent on the typically Macarian dimension of spiritual experience. Des Places 1982 and Larchet 1991 take up important connections between Maximus and his ascetic forebears. The thesis of opposition between Evagrius and Macarius enunciated in Hausherr has proven remarkably resilient, especially with regard to the later Byzantine tradition (Meyendorff 1998 and Nadal Cañellas 2006). For attempts to overcome the Evagrian–Macarian dichotomy see Golitzin 1994 and Plested 2004: 59–71.

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Notes:

([1]) Maximus, in this *Amb.*, expands upon Gregory of Nazianzus' designation of the body as a veil to speak of the Spirit's lifting of the 'veils of the passions' from the intellect. This is an interesting and uncommon phrase. Macarius had characterized the 'veil of the passions' as the inheritance of the Fall (*Hom.coll.* 3, 59. 1. 1; cf. *Vat.graec.coll.* 25. 1. 7 and *Hom.coll.* 3, 26. 5. 3), a veil that may only be removed by the power of the Spirit, illuminating the intellect with heavenly light (*Hom.coll.* 3, 26. 6. 2).

([2]) Indeed, Macarius defines the experience of divine light as *the* defining characteristic of Christianity: 'The blessed apostle Paul, the architect of the church, forever anxious for the truth and not wishing that those who hear the word should be impeded by ignorance, indicated with great exactitude and clarity the goal of the truth and made known the perfect mystery of Christianity in every believing soul, this being to receive through a divine operation the experience of the effulgence of the heavenly light in holy souls in the revelation and power of the Spirit' (*Vat.graec.coll.* 58. 1. 1).

([3]) The doctrine of the second soul is condemned in the anti-Messalian list of John of Damascus (*Haer.* 80, Kotter 1981: 43. 34–5): 'They say that a human being must acquire two souls, one which is common to human beings and one which is heavenly.' This is in itself a perfectly orthodox notion, traditional within the Syriac tradition. It is found, for example, in Aphrahat, *Demonstrationes* (Graffin 1894: 294). Elsewhere in Macarius, see *Vat.graec.coll.* 10. 4–5, 22. 2. 9, 63. 1. 2; *Hom.* 1. 9, 12. 16, 15. 22, 15. 35, 30. 3, 30. 6, 32. 6, 44. 9, 52. 5; *Hom.coll.* 3, 10. 2. 4.

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([4]) Larchet 1991: 67 n.34, notes rightly that this two-fold schema is also found in Mark. The point is also made in Blowers–Wilken 2003: 40. Neither observes that Mark in turn has the substance of the schema from Macarius. Cf. Plested 2004: 81–90.

([5]) The experience of sin and grace is allowed for good reason: 'So that by the experience of the two natures, tasting frequently both the bitterness of sin and the sweetness of grace, the soul might become more perceptive and more vigilant, so as to flee evil entirely and to attach itself wholly to the Lord' (*Hom.coll.* 3, 12. 2. 2).

([6]) It is found in *Opusc*.7, PG 91. 69C; *Q.Thal.* 51, Laga–Steel 1980: 403. 167–405. 71; *Q.Thal.* 63, Laga–Steel 1980: 169. 367–8; *Q.Thal.* 65, Laga–Steel 1980: 293. 654; *QD* 80, Declerck 1982: 63.85–7, 89; *Q.Thal.* 5, Laga–Steel 1980: 65. 27–8; *Q.Thal.* 63, Laga–Steel 1980: 175. 463–5; *In ps. LIX*, Van Deun 1991: 9. 104–5.

([7]) On the centrality of the heart as the seat of knowledge in Maximus, see for example *Car.* 4. 70, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 224; *Q.Thal.* 65, Laga–Steel 1980: 297. 712–13; *QD* 64, Declerck 1982: 51. 27–9; *Amb.Io.* 48, PG 91. 1364C. For spiritual struggle within the heart, see *Q.Thal.* 56, Laga–Steel 1980: 13. 153–4, and *Q.Thal.* 62; Laga–Steel 1980: 127. 206–8.

Marcus Plested

Marcus Plested is associate professor in the Department of Theology at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

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Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor

Ysabel De Andia

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[–] Abstract and Keywords

Thanks to his identification with the judge whom St. Paul converted on the Areopagus, Ps-Dionysius is located within the neo-Platonic tradition, and thus in a neutral time-period that affords him both authority and freedom. But the contents of the *Corpus dionysiacum* are more expressive than that label indicates: 'Dionysius' is a student of Proclus as much as of St. Paul, and so deserves the double title of 'neo-Platonic Christian'. This chapter considers the Christology and negative theology in Maximus' *Ambigua*, and the ecclesiology and creed in the *Mystagogia*, and compares them with similar concepts in the works of Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite, the sixth-century neo-Platonist philosopher and theologian.

Keywords: Christology, Mystagogia, Ambigua, ecclesiology, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, neo-Platonism, creed

THANKS to his identification with the judge whom St Paul converted on the Areopagus, Ps-Dionysius is located within the neo-Platonic tradition, and thus in a neutral time-period that affords him both authority and freedom. But the contents of the *Corpus dionysiacum* are more expressive than that label indicates: 'Dionysius' is a student of Proclus as much as of St. Paul, and so deserves the double title of 'neo-Platonic Christian'.

In his article in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* on the Ps-Dionysian influence on Maximus the Confessor, Polycarp Sherwood (1957) identifies forty passages in the works of Maximus where Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite is (1) named, (2) quoted verbatim, (3) quoted in general, or (4) where there is an allusion to Dionysius, use of his terminology, or of his doctrine. Sherwood concurs with Myrrha Lot-Borodine: 'His spirituality has not been influenced by Evagrius, as much as by Ps-Dionysius, because he rediscovered the Alexandrian tradition. Both attached themselves among others to the school of the Cappadocians' (Lot-Borodine 1970: 80 n.14). The scholars who have discussed that influence are von Balthasar (1961: 110–22) and Sherwood (1955b, 1957). Here I would like to reflect especially on two works (*Amb.Th*. and *Myst*.) in which Maximus directly discusses an idea of Ps-Dionysius or is inspired by his works.

Theandric Activity in the *Ambigua*

Maximus dedicates the fifth chapter of the *Ambigua Addressed to Thomas* (*Amb.Th. 5*) to the interpretation of the expression theandric activity (ἐνέργεια θεανδρική), employed by Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite in *Ep. 4 to Gaius* (Heil–Ritter 1991: 160).

(p. 178) Gaius inquires 'how' the Incarnation or the 'humanization' of Jesus took place, who, though superessential to the same degree as God, nonetheless took on essence 'inasmuch as he is truly human according to the totality of his essence':

> You ask how it could be that Jesus, who transcends all, is placed in the same order of being (οὐσιωδῶς)

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> with all human beings? He is not called a human being here in the context of being the cause of a human being but rather as being himself truly a human being in all essential respects (κατ᾽οὐσίαν ὅλην). But we do not confine our definition of Jesus to the human domain (ἀνθρωπικῶς). For he is not simply a human being, nor would he be transcendent if he were only a human being. Out of his very great love for human beings (φιλανθρωπία), he became truly a human being, both superhuman and among human beings; and, though himself beyond being, he took upon himself the being of humans (ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρώπων οὐσίας ὁ ὑπερούσιος οὐσιωμένος). Yet he is not less overflowing with transcendence. He is the ever-transcendent, and superabundantly so.
>
> (*Ep. 4*, Heil–Ritter 1991: 160. 3–12; trans. Luibheid 1987: 264 amended)

It should first be noted that Ps-Dionysius employs the verb οὐσιῶ, οὐσιῶσθαι (‘to assume essence, to take on substance’), which was employed for the first time by Porphyry in the *Sentences* (*Sent.* 39, Lamberz 1975: 47. 3, and *Sent.* 41, Lamberz 1975: 52. 8). This active verb expresses the same action by which the transcendent takes on human essence in the Incarnation or the ‘humanization’ of Jesus. Ps-Dionysius obviously cannot speak of an ‘essence’ of the transcendent, but only of the human being. Maximus, however, will deliberately correct Ps-Dionysius in following the formula of the Council of Chalcedon by speaking of two natures in Christ, one divine and one human, to which correspond two operations or energies.

Maximus’ argument develops in three stages: first, it demonstrates the necessary correspondance between a nature and its constitutive operation; then it exposes the distinction between mode and nature; last, it supplies an orthodox interpretation of the expression ‘theandric activity’.

Maximus starts by drawing a distinction between ‘existence’ and ‘how one exists’, between nature and mode:

> [We know that] the essential principle of *being* (ὁ τοῦ εἶναι λόγος) is confirmed with respect to nature (φύσιν), while the mode of existence (ὁ τοῦ πῶς εἶναι τρόπος) is confirmed with respect to the *economy* (οἰκονομίαν). The conjunction of these, by fashioning the great mystery of the ‘natural principle of Jesus who is beyond nature’ (Ps-Dionysius, *Div. nom.* 2. 9), demonstrates that the distinction of activities as well as the union is preserved in him, where distinction is seen in the natural rational principle of each of the natures that have been united *inseparably* (τὴν μὲν ἀδιαιρέτως), and union is understood in the singular mode of those things which exist unconfused in the essential principle of the united natures, the second is recognized *without confusion* (τὴν δὲ ἀσυγχύτως) in the single mode (ἐν τῷ μοναδικῷ τρόπῳ) of what is produced.
>
> (*Amb.Th.* 5, Janssens 2002: 25. 116–23; trans. Lollar 2009: 66–7)

(p. 179) The difference in the energies is contemplated without division, and the union of the same is recognized without confusion. The two adverbs from the dogmatic formula of Chalcedon introduce Maximus’ ‘confession’:

> [I]t is necessary piously to confess both the natures of Christ, of which he himself was the hypostasis, and the natural activities of each nature, of which he himself was the true union, since he worked in himself naturally and monadically (μοναδικῶς)—that is to say, in a uniform way (ἑνοειδῶς)—and by means of all the things which manifest, inseparably with the divine power, the activity of his own flesh.
>
> (*Amb.Th.* 5, Janssens 2002: 25. 128–33; trans. Lollar 2009: 67)

To the two natures of Christ, human and divine, correspond two ‘natural’‘operations’ or ‘activities’ (ἐνέργειαι), one human, one divine. However, the unique hypostasis ‘operates in one manner’ (μοναδικῶς ἐνεργῶν). No longer is it a question of the operation corresponding to the nature, but to the mode of the one and the other operation. It is at this point that, in a second step in their argument, Ps-Dionysius, and Maximus after him, speak of ‘mode’.

> He is the ever-transcendent, and superabundantly so (ὁ ἀεὶ ὑπερούσιος). He takes on being and is himself *beyond being* (καὶ εἰς οὐσίαν ἀληθῶς ἐλθὼν ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν οὖν οὐσιώθη). Superior himself to the human condition he does the work of a human being. A proof of this is that a virgin supernaturally bore him and that flowing water which, bearing the weight of his corporeal, earthly feet, did not yield, but rather, held him up with supernatural power. (Cf. Matt. 14: 25)

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(*Ep.* 4, Heil–Ritter 1991: 160. 10–161. 2; trans. Luibheid 1987: 264 amended)

The 'mode' of operation has changed: 'he performs the activities of a human being in a superhuman way'. The two examples Ps-Dionysius gives in the above passage of Jesus' virgin birth and his walking on the water are adopted by Maximus:

> [H]e yet remained beyond being (ὑπὲρ οὐσίαν οὖν οὐσιώθη), even as he entered the realm of being, having fashioned *a different beginning of generation* (Wis. 7: 5) and of birth in human nature … For the same one is both virgin and mother. She institutes nature anew renewing nature by the conjunction of opposites … Therefore, the virgin is truly *Mother of God*, conceiving and bearing 'the Word beyond being' like a seed in a manner beyond being.
>
> (*Amb.Th.* 5, Janssens 2002: 26; trans. Lollar 2009: 67–8)

Where Maximus speaks of a 'renewal of nature by the convergence of opposites' (virgin and mother), Ps-Dionysius speaks of 'negation through transcendence':

> There is so much else and who could list it all? As one considers it all in a divine manner, one will recognize in a transcending way that every affirmation regarding Jesus' love for humanity has the force of a negation pointing towards transcendence (δύναμιν ὑπεροχικῆς ἀποφάσεως ἔχοντα).
>
> (*Ep.* 4, Heil–Ritter 1991: 161. 3–5; trans. Luibhead 1987: 264–5)

(p. 180) Thus, any positive statement about Jesus' 'philanthropy' has the sense of a 'negation through transcendence' (ὑπεροχικὴ ἀπόφασις). The mode of his human actions, for example his virginal birth, is above human nature and denies human nature, even though it assumes human nature in every respect. This is why 'any positive statement' about Jesus' philanthropy has the sense of a 'negation through transcendence'. This assertion by Ps-Dionysius is adopted by Maximus:

> For the Word beyond being having put on everything belonging to human nature, together with human nature itself, in his ineffable conception, possessed nothing which is humanly 'affirmed' by natural reason, which was not also divine, and denied in a manner beyond nature (τρόπῳ τῷ ὑπὲρ φύσιν ἀποφασκόμενον).
>
> (*Amb.Th.* 5, Janssens 2002: 27–8, 171–4; trans. Lollar 2009: 68–9)

The positive, concerning human nature, is also negative by transcendence, because in Christ there is, according to the mode (τρόπος) (a term not found in Ps-Dionysius, who replaces it with adverbs) 'nothing human … that was once divine'. Thus Christ did not accomplish divine things solely in a divine manner and human things solely in a human manner, but through a new mode:

> For, by the assumption of flesh intellectually endowed with a soul, the preeminent lover of humankind truly became human, and he fulfilled theandrically the economy on our behalf, according to the divine activity that was made human by a natural conjunction of fleshly activity according to an ineffable union; that is to say, he fulfilled it divinely and humanly. He accomplished both the *divine things and the human things*, or to speak more clearly, he conducted his life by means of both a divine and a human activity in the same act (ἅμα καὶ ἀνδρικῶς τά τε θεῖα καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα δράσας, θεϊϊκὴν ἐν ταυτῷ καὶ ἀνδρικὴν ἐνέργειαν).
>
> (*Amb.Th.* 5, Janssens 2002: 29. 206–30. 212; trans. Lollar 2009: 70 amended)

It is the 'ineffable union' of the two natures that allows one to speak of a theandric activity while maintaining the two energies corresponding to the two natures, and not of a composite nature:

> *He says* 'theandric' (θεανδρικήν), neither as something simple, nor yet as some synthetic thing. In the first case, the activity would either exist naturally from the bare divinity alone or from mere humanity alone. In the second, it would find itself in a no-man's-land, in a nature synthesized from the extremes. Rather, it exists by God having become human, that is, by perfectly becoming human with respect to what most naturally belongs to human nature.

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(*Amb.Th.* 5, Janssens 2002: 31. 231–6; trans. Lollar 2009: 71 amended)

After responding to objections about that theandric activity that is neither unique nor composite, Maximus justifies the use of the term 'theandric' by Ps-Dionysius:

> The one who has conceived of the concord in this mystery has, perhaps, given this activity the name 'theandric' so that he might demonstrate that the mode of exchange (p. 181) in the ineffable union, in the interchange of the things added naturally to each part of Christ, has been achieved with respect to each nature without the change and comingling of each part with the other, in accordance with the rational principle in each nature.
>
> (*Amb.Th.* 5, Janssens 2002: 32. 265–33. 271; trans. Lollar 2009: 72)

This 'exchange of properties' belonging to the two natures, or this 'communication of idioms', helps to explain the expression 'theandric activity' without falling into monophysitism or monoenergism. It is thanks to the Chalcedonian interpretation of the expression 'theandric activity' by Maximus the Confessor that there has been an 'orthodox reception' of the Christology of Ps-Dionysius in the Byzantine world.

Being, Well-Being, Eternal Being

The second text from the *Ambigua Addressed to John* concerns the triad being–well-being–eternal being. Jean-Claude Larchet (1996: 165–78) offers a good analysis of this triad. Ps-Dionysius, in chapter 5 of his *Divine Names* on Being, speaks of being and well-being:[1]

> And then there are the souls, together with all the other creatures. It is in accordance with the same principle that they too possess being and well-being. They are and are well, and they have this being and well-being from the Pre-existent, in whom they are, in whom they are well, from whom they have their beginning and their protection, towards whom they come as a final goal.
>
> (*Div.nom.* 5. 8, Suchla 1990: 186. 8–12; trans. Luibheid 1987: 101)

Maximus added the third term, eternal being (τοῦ ἀεὶ εἶναι), and distinguished three *logoi* of being. So he comments on Acts 17: 28 by applying the triad 'being–well-being–eternal being' to life, movement, and being:

> 'For, in him, we live, and move and have our being' (Acts 17: 28). For the human being exists (γίνεται) in God by diligence, which does not corrupt the *logos* of being that pre-exists in God (ἐν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ εἶναι λόγον); he moves in God by the *logos* of well-being that pre-exists in God (ἐν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ εὖ εἶναι λόγον), acting in accordance with the virtues; and he lives in God by the *logos* of his eternal being that pre-exists in God (ἐν τῷ θεῷ τοῦ ἀεὶ εἶναι λόγον) … And he is a 'part of God', inasmuch as he exists, due to the *logos* of his being, which is in God, in as much as he is good, due to the *logos* of his well-being, which is in God, and in as much as he is god, due to the *logos* of his eternal being, which is in God … And God, by accommodation (συγκαταβάσει) to him, is called a human being and by this arrangement of a reciprocal gift (τῆς ἀντιδιδομένης διαθέσεως) is demonstrated the power which, through God's love, deifies the human being for God, and, through the human being's love, humanizes God for the human being, and effects, (p. 182) through a beautiful reciprocal transformation (κατὰ τὴν ἀντιστροφὴν), that the human being is God through the deification (θέωσιν) of the human being, and that God is the human being, through the humanization (ἀνθρώπησιν) of God.
>
> (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1084C)

The human being is a fragment of God through a three-fold connection: firstly, in respect of their being, through their *logos* of *being* which is in God; secondly, in respect of being good, through their *logos* of *well-being* which is in God; and finally, in respect of being god, through their *logos* of *eternal being* which is in God.

Maximus distinguishes the *logos* of being which corresponds to the creation of 'being', the *logos* of well-being which corresponds to the 'movement' of the spirit and to the good life lived according to the virtues, and the *logos* of perpetual well-being, which corresponds to 'life' eternal and to the deification of the human being, thanks to the humanization of God or to the Incarnation of the Word.

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Power, Action, Rest

We find the triad again in chapter 65 of the *Ambigua Addressed to John* on the *Sermon on Holy Pentecost* (8) of Gregory of Nazianzus:

> Those who have knowledge of divine things speak, in fact, of three modes: the complete reason (*logos*) of all original rational beings is considered as possessing the *logos* of being, that of well-being and that of eternal being. The first *logos* is given to beings according to essence (κατ' οὐσίαν), the second is given by free choice (κατὰ προαίρεσιν) to those who are free to move, and the third, that of eternal being, is granted by grace (κατὰ χάριν). And they say that the first encompasses power, the second action, and the third, rest … That is perhaps the mysteriously celebrated Sabbath, and the great day of rest from divine works, which, according to the account of the Creation of the world, appears to have neither beginning, nor end, nor origin.
>
> (*Amb.Io.* 65, PG 91. 1392A–C)

The *logos* of being is given by essence (κατ'οὐσίαν), the *logos* of well-being is given by free choice (κατὰ προαίρεσιν), and the *logos* of eternal being is given by grace (κατὰ χάριν). They correspond to power (δύναμις), action (ἐνέργεια), and rest (ἀργία).

Birth, Baptism, Resurrection

Maximus further draws a parallel between the three types of being and three types of generation: (p. 183)

> In my view, too, the Teacher thus said that Our Lord and God in this way honoured our three-fold birth (γέννησιν), that is, our modes of being, well-being, and eternal being, the first in regard to the body, being one from two through co-existence, the parts combined one with the other (I mean body and soul), existence divided in two because of the distinct mode of each birth; the second in regard to baptism, through which we abundantly receive well-being; the third in regard to the resurrection, through which we are transformed by grace in view of eternal being.
>
> (*Amb.Io.* 42, PG 91. 1325B–C)

Our three-fold birth means the modes of our birth: the first in regard to the body, corresponds to being; the second in regard to baptism, corresponds to well-being; the third in regard to the resurrection, corresponds to eternal being. By virtue the human being is made to correspond in themselves to the beginning and the end, the image and the likeness which together are the purpose, the vision (σκόπος) that God has for them. Thus is realized the triad *being–well-being–eternal being,* transposed by Maximus into the ascetic domain:

> Our Lord and God has honoured our three-fold birth, that is, the three general modes of our birth: in being, well-being, and eternal being. The first, in regard to the body through which we acquire being; the second in regard to baptism, when we receive in abundance well-being; the third in regard to the resurrection, through which we are transformed by grace for eternal being.
>
> (*Amb.Io.* 42, PG 91. 1325B–C)

Jean-Claude Larchet sees in the 'three redemptive births of Christ'—birth, baptism, and resurrection—the basis of the 'three births of the human being':

> One sees at present how the three schemas of Maximus' thought—anthropological, metaphysical, and christological—are articulated, how the three births of the human being, the triad 'being–well-being–eternal being', and what one could call the three redemptive births of Christ, correspond: Christ's birth in the flesh corresponds to the *logos* of being, and to the birth of the human being to participate in the body; Christ's baptism corresponds to the *logos* of well-being, and to the spiritual rebirth of the human being in baptism; Christ's resurrection corresponds to the *logos* of eternal being and to the future resurrection of the human being. More precisely, the christological triad lies at the basis of the other two, since Christ assumed the three modes of human birth in order to 'honour' them, as Maximus says, following Gregory, that is, to restore the first in order to restore to the human being the capacity to accomplish freely the second, and in

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> order to grant them the third.
>
> (Larchet 1996: 413–14)

Thus the christological schema forms the basis of the anthropological and the metaphysical ones. But one could equally say that the basis is 'theological': it is God who is creator of both, who grants the human being deification and ultimately eternal being.

(p. 184) Deification (θέωσις) in *Question 64 to Thalassius*

> It was truly necessary that the one who is by nature the Creator of the essence of beings was also responsible for the deification of created beings by grace, so that the One who gives being also appears as the One who grants, in being, eternal being.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 237. 800–4)

The distinction here is between nature and grace, grace necessary for 'well-being' and for 'eternal being'. Maximus assigns 'eternal being' to the Eighth Day, that of the complete illuminating *parousia* of God, and to our intimate participation in it (*Amb.Io.* 65, PG 91. 1392D). Finally, in the *Two Centuries on Theology and the Incarnation*, he notes that 'the Eighth Day announces the ineffable mystery of the eternal well-being' of beings:

> The Sixth Day manifests the principle (*logos*) of the being of beings, the Seventh signifies the mode (*tropos*) of the well-being of beings, the Eighth announces the ineffable mystery of the eternal well-being of beings.
>
> (*Th.oec.*56, PG 90. 1104C)

The three-fold distinction between being, well-being, and eternal being corresponds to different 'days' of the world, in a protological and eschatological sense, and to different states of the human being: the final state is that of deification. 'Whoever is rendered worthy of the Eighth Day … lives the blessed life of God … so that he himself becomes god through deification' (*Th.oec.* 54, PG 90. 1104A–B).

Negative Theology and Transfiguration

The third example from the *Ambigua Addressed to John* concerns negative theology, a topic common to both Ps-Dionysius and Maximus (De Andia 1997: 293–328). It is in regard to the Transfiguration of Christ that Maximus speaks of two 'modes' of theology, kataphatic and apophatic, which correspond to two types of symbols, as well as the 'mystical theology according to the apophasis'. According to the schema proposed by Sherwood (1955b: 33), *Ambiguum* 10 divides into two parts, the first on *Logos and Theoria* (chs. 1–42), the second on *Dyad and Monad* (chs. 43–51). Maximus presents at chapter 17 an initial 'contemplation (θεωρία) of the Transfiguration', which calls for an initial development, from chapter 18 to 30, on the written law and the natural law, whose harmony is represented by Melchisedec, Abraham, and Moses, and another 'contemplation of the Transfiguration', at chapter 31, followed by a second development, firstly on (p. 185) negative theology and affirmative theology, then on providence and judgement, represented by Moses and Elijah.

Maximus comments on a passage of a sermon of Gregory of Nazianzus on the crossing (of the Red Sea) or passage (through the veil of the flesh) (διάβασις). It is the first difference between Maximus and Ps-Dionysius: for the former, contemplation presupposes a διάβασις of the senses that rise to the intellect by means of reason, while, for Ps-Dionysius, exceeding the sensible and the intelligible by the contemplative mind (νοῦς θεωρητικός) does not imply an assumption of sense and reason by the intellect. For the one, the ascension is an assumption of the inferior in the superior or a crossing from the inferior to the superior; for the other, it is a simple passing of the inferior by the superior.

At chapter 31, Maximus provides 'another abridged contemplation on the Transfiguration':

> For I think that the divinely-fitting events that took place on the mount at the Transfiguration secretly indicate the two universal modes of theology: that is, that which is pre-eminent and simple (ἁπλοῦν) and

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> uncaused, and through sole and complete denial (ἀπόφοσιν) truly affirms the divine, and fittingly and solemnly exalts its transcendence through speechlessness (ἄφασιν), and then that which follows this and is composite (σύνθετον), and from what has been caused magnificently sketches out [the divine] through affirmation (κατάφασιν).
>
> (*Amb*. 10. 31 b, PG 91. 1165B; trans. Louth 1996: 131–2)

Maximus' order in the *Ambigua* is the inverse of that of Ps-Dionysius in the *Mystical Theology.* For Ps-Dionysius, the affirmation is first and the negation second, because the negation is based on the affirmation. For Maximus, the 'primary mode' is the affirmation (ἀπόφασις), which is an affirmation of the divine by a lack of speech (ἀφασία), while the 'mode that follows' (ἀκολούθως) is an affirmation of the Cause in respect of its effects. According to Maximus, the order proceeds from simple to composite (σύνθετον), or from origin to effects. The first mode is the order of the absence of speech, the second, of speech. Maximus' conception of negative theology and affirmative theology differs from that of Ps-Dionysius on three points:

> **(a)** For Maximus, negation, according to the descending order of the *kenosis* (κένωσις), is first because it concerns the divine essence and the affirmation is based on its activity. For Ps-Dionysius the 'ascending of the negations' (*Div.nom*. 13. 3, Suchla 1990: 230. 1) participates in the sensible and rises to the intelligible, to the entrance of the 'darkness where God stands' (Exod. 20: 21), beyond affirmation and negation.
> **(b)** The distinction between negative theology and affirmative theology presupposes, for Maximus, the theological (and not merely ontological) distinction between theology and economy; for Ps-Dionysius, the distinction between God as Cause of all and as supernatural Cause.
> (p. 186) **(c)** This is why the pre-eminence (ὑπερβολή) is conceived of philosophically by Ps-Dionysius, whereas it is conceived of theologically by Maximus: the divine superabundance is manifested in the hypostatic union. And it is in relation to the hypostatic union that Maximus could speak of a 'play of the Logos' (*Amb.Io.* 71, PG 91. 1408C–1417C) between negation and affirmation, a play in that the negative, applied to God, becomes positive, the privation being 'an excess', and the affirmation, in turn, states positively the negative divine attributes.

Their conception of mystical theology is equally different. Firstly, the mystical theology of Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite is a mystique of darkness, the ultimate divine symbol borrowed from the book of Exodus (Exod. 20: 21) to describe the 'unapproachable light' of 1 Timothy 6: 16; while that of Maximus is a mystique of 'light', also 'unapproachable' as divine light, radiating from the transfigured Christ: 'The light of the Lord's sparkling face … belongs to mystical theology according to the affirmation (ἀπόφασις)' (*Amb.Io.* 10. 31d, PG 91. 1168A), while the kataphatic mode concerns the One who decides according to the activity of providence and judgement. The mode according to the activity is demonstrated by the Lord's shining clothes (*Amb.Io*. 10. 31e, PG 91. 1168A).

Secondly, the 'mystical theology according to the affirmation' concerns the 'essence' of the Divinity; the affirmative theology is 'according to the activity'. Furthermore, the mystical theology of Ps-Dionysius involves exceeding the intellect that prolongs the ascending of the negations by the momentum (ἐπιβολή) which projects it towards the divine Light or by an ecstatic state (ἔκστασις) where it leaves 'everything and itself' (*Theol.myst.* 1. 1, Heil–Ritter 1991: 142. 10–11); while that of Maximus is an assumption or a unification of the cosmos and the powers of the human being—sense, reason, and intellect—in the unity of the 'Logos who is one' (*Amb.Io.* 10. 19, PG 91. 1137B). It is a 'synthesis of everything in Christ', as demonstrated by von Balthasar (1961).

Mystagogy

The second major text that demonstrates the relationship between Ps-Dionysius and Maximus is the *Mystagogy*. I propose to compare the *Mystagogy* with chapter 3 of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* and with other works from the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, such as the *Divine Names* and the *Mystical Theology,* noting the outline without going into all the details of vocabulary.

Maximus addresses this treatise to a brother he met, to whom he spoke of the instruction he received from an Elder, whom we assume is Sophronius of Jerusalem (Dalmais 1972: 55–6), then to a group of brothers (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 9), which leads one to think of a monastic community.

The *Mystagogy* is composed of two major parts (chs. 1–7 and 8–23), framed by an introduction, which ends in a

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prayer, and by a conclusion (ch. 24, Boudignon 2011: 55–74). They are announced in the introduction (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 14) and are recalled at (p. 187) the beginning of chapter 8 (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 36), during the transition from the first to the second part. Maximus specifies the purpose and content by reference to the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Ps-Dionysius:

> But since the symbols of the sacred celebration of the holy synaxis have also been considered by the most holy and truly divine interpreter Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite in a manner which is worthy of his great mind in his treatise *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, it should be known that the present work will not repeat these same things nor will it proceed in the same manner … Instead, my subject will be those things which God in his goodness wanted him to leave for others and exercise of the habit of these things in accordance with their desire for divine things. In them the beaming ray of ceremonies, once grasped, becomes understood in proportion to them and draws to itself those who are seized by this desire.
>
> (*Myst*. Preface, Boudignon 2011: 6–7; trans. Berthold 1985: 184)

Finally, it is his own thoughts that he wants to express: 'But such things I remember and can comprehend dimly and speak of even more dimly, but devoutly and with the grace of God who illumines obscure things' (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 8. 90–2; trans. Berthold 1985: 185).

Mystagogy and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3

The first part of Mystagogy (chs. 1–7) concerns the 'holy church' which is an 'image of God' (ch.1), a 'type and image of the world' (ch. 2), invisible and visible. Chapters 4 and 5 concern the relationship between the church and humankind (cf. Renczes 2003): 'the church is humankind', because like humankind it is composed of nave, sanctuary, and altar. It suggests to a human being a journey in three stages: moral philosophy, physical contemplation, and mystical theology (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 15–17). For its part, humankind is a 'mystical church' (ch. 4), because it is in human beings that the path to deification is realized. In chapter 5 it is the soul that is an image of the church. The soul has two parts: a contemplative part, the intellect (νοῦς), and a practical part, reason (λόγος). While the division of theology into moral, physical, and mystical contemplation derives from Origen, the fact that Maximus adds wisdom (σοφία) could suggest a recollection of chapter 7 of the *Divine Names* on 'wisdom, intellect, reason, truth, faith' (*Div.nom.* 7, Suchla 1990: 193–200).

The following chapters (chs. 6 and 7) are devoted to what Maximus calls 'the three men': 'the world, Scripture, and that which is in ourselves' (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 31–3).

The second part (chs. 8–23) sets out the 'views of the blessed Elder' and the chronological sequence of the holy liturgy (*Myst*. 8, Boudignon 2011: 36–7). Chapters 9–12 give the meaning of the rites up to the Gospel, and the progression of the rites that ensue up to the conformation 'to the monad in an, insofar as possible, indivisible identity' (*Myst*. 13, (p. 188) Boudignon 2011: 41–2). Again, is the sense of 'monad' Dionysian as well as Origenist? Chapters 14 to 21 cover the same rites, giving them an eschatological meaning; however, at the conclusion to chapter 21 (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 48–9), the reality is no longer signified in the future, but in the present. Chapters 22 and 23 cover the rites as a whole from the point of view of the gnostic soul: the progression of the liturgy is also a progression of the gnostic soul. Chapter 23 employs a more elaborate vocabulary than one finds in Maximus' other works (Thunberg 1965: 68–71). Chapter 24 is a summary of the whole. Maximus once again refers to the work of 'the holy Dionysius the Areopagite' (*Myst*., Boudignon 2011: 55–6).

Let us now review the development of the liturgy to see the points of comparison with chapter 3 of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. In the introduction, Maximus says that the Elder 'contemplated mystically' and had his 'mind naturally illuminated by the divine rays', before 'explaining most precisely the things he contemplated' (Bornert 1966: 99). Now this is what Ps-Dionysius says about the purpose of the hierarchy:

> The goal of the hierarchy, then, is to enable beings to be as like as possible to God and to be at one with him. A hierarchy has God as its leader of all understanding and action. It is forever looking directly at the comeliness of God. A hierarchy bears in itself the mark of God. Hierarchy causes its members to be images of God in all respects, to be clear and *spotless mirrors* (Wis 7: 26) reflecting the glow of primordial light and indeed of God … It ensures that when its members have received this full and divine splendor they can then pass on this light generously and in accordance with God's will to beings further down the scale.

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> (*Hier.cael.* 3. 2, Heil–Ritter 1991: 17. 10–18. 6; trans. Luibheid 1987: 154)

At the end of the introduction (*Myst.*, Boudignon 2011: 9–10), Maximus outlines the transcendence of God by saying that the concepts of being and non-being both belong to and do not belong to the Divinity. Similarly, Ps-Dionysius in the *Divine Names* says that the 'supra-existent being … is as no other being is … Cause of all existence, and therefore itself transcending existence …' (*Div.nom.* 1. 1, Suchla 1990: 109–10; trans. Luibheid 1987: 50).

Similarly, in the first chapter (*Myst.* 1, Boudignon 2011: 13–14), the image of creation as a 'circle' whose 'centre' God occupies is found in the *Divine Names*:

> Now this is unified and one and common to the whole Deity, that the entire wholeness is participated in by each of those who participate in it; none participates in only a part. It is rather like the case of a circle. The center point of the circle is shared by the surrounding radii.
>
> (*Div.nom.* 2. 5, Suchla 1990: 129. 4–7; trans. Luibheid 1987: 62)[2]

Maximus shows God as one who 'gathers in him, in unity, all the diversity of beings', just as, in the *Divine Names*, 'The Good returns all things to itself and gathers together (p. 189) whatever may be scattered …' (*Div.nom.* 4. 4, Suchla 1990: 149. 8–9; trans. Luibheid 1987: 75). In chapter 5, Maximus speaks of the accord between the Old and New Testaments, like Ps-Dionysius (*Hier.eccl.* 3. 3. 5) and many other authors. In chapter 8, for Maximus the first entry of the liturgy signifies the first coming of Christ, as in Ps-Dionysius (*Hier.eccl.* 3. 3. 11). In chapter 18 on the signification of the divine confession of faith, Maximus depends directly on Ps-Dionysius (*Hier.eccl.* 3. 3. 7; cf. Bornert 1966: 102). In the following chapter, the union of angels and human beings is described as 'an eternal movement around God' (τῆς ἀτρέπτου περὶ θεὸν ἀει κινησίας) (*Myst.* 19, Boudignon 2011: 47. 749–50), an expression that is found in Ps-Dionysius (*Hier.cael.* 7. 1, Heil–Ritter 1991: 27. 14): 'The perpetual movement around the divine secrets' (τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀεικίνητον … περὶ τὰ θεῖα) (Bornert 1966: 103).

According to Bornert (1966), the idea of deification by communion (ch. 21) depends more directly on Ps-Dionysius (*Hier.eccl.* 3. 1, Heil–Ritter 1991: 79 and 81–2). According to Sherwood, the image of the light from the lamps that produces a single light, which Ps-Dionysius employed to explain the unity and distinction in the Trinity (*Div.nom.* 2. 4, Suchla 1990: 127), is found in chapter 23: the Divinity 'is complete Unity in its nature, complete Trinity in the hypostases, and a single ray rising in the form of a single light to the three-fold glory' (*Myst.* 23, Boudignon 2011: 53 861–3). At the end of chapter 1, we find the only explicit citation of Ps-Dionysius by Maximus regarding angels (cf. Sherwood 1957: 295):

> The angel is an image of God. He is a manifestation of the hidden light. He is a mirror, pure, bright, untarnished, unspotted, receiving, if one may say so, the full loveliness of the divine goodness and purely enlightening within itself as far as possible the goodness of the silence in the inner sanctuaries.
>
> (*Div.nom.*4. 22, Suchla 1990: 170; trans. Luibheid 1987: 89)

Thus Maximus, in the *Mystagogy*, cites Ps-Dionysius and is inspired by Ps-Dionysius, but creates a personal work which he considers a complement to the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.*

The *Mystagogy* and the *Divine Names*

We have already noted the images of the centre and of the circle in *Myst.* 1, found in the *Divine Names* 2. 5 and 5. 6. One should also note the triad, wisdom–intellect–reason (σοφία, νοῦς, λόγος), that appears in the title of the *Divine Names* 7 and the fact that Maximus comments in *Myst.* 5 on the church, a figure of the soul considered in itself. Editors Sotiropoulos (2001) and Boudignon (2011) indicate in their notes to the *Mystagogy* the parallel terms in the *Corpus Dionysiacum*. Sotiropoulos supplies numerous parallels, some of which are not indicated by Boudignon, like the term παρυφίστανται (2001: 170. 6) which picks up the Proclian term παρυπόστασις used by Ps-Dionysius in the *Divine Names* 4. 31.

(p. 190) The *Mystagogy* and the *Mystical Theology*

It is in relation to the divine names, 'being' or 'non-being', that one can once again establish a relationship between

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Maximus' *Mystagogy* and Ps-Dionysius' *Mystical Theology*. For Maximus 'non-being' best suits God in that God is 'super-being':

> The name that best suits God, who is super-being, is rather non-being. And if we must recognize the absolute difference between God and created beings, then the affirmation of the super-being is the negation of created beings, and the affirmation of created beings is the negation of the super-being. The two names, then, are piously applicable to God and neither of them fits him properly, namely being and non-being.
>
> (*Myst*. Pref., Boudignon 2011: 9)

Maximus establishes a reciprocity between 'the affirmation of the super-being' that implies 'the negation of created beings'; and 'the affirmation of created beings' that implies 'the negation of the super-being', while the second affirmation is not on the same level as the first. Nevertheless, he concludes with Ps-Dionysius: 'In truth God possesses an existence that is simple, unknowable, impenetrable to all and completely inexplicable and as beyond all affirmation as all negation' (*Myst.* Pref., Boudignon 2011: 10. 124–6).

Similarly, Ps-Dionysius concludes his *Mystical Theology* with the statement:

> The transcendent Cause is nothing that is not and nothing that is … Concerning it there is absolutely no affirmation, nor negation; rather, when we pose affirmations and negations of what comes after it we neither affirm nor deny it, since the perfect and unitary Cause of all is beyond all affirmation and the transcendence of the One who is absolutely detached from all and who is beyond all is beyond all negation.
>
> (*Theol.myst*. 5, Heil–Ritter 1991: 150)

The divine transcendence is as beyond affirmation as it is beyond negation.

Union with the Ineffable or Union with the One

The *Mystical Theology* concludes with the union of the intellect with the Ineffable: 'Now, ascending from below to what is above, according to the measure of its ascent, it restricts itself and, at the end of the entire ascent, it will lose its voice entirely and unite completely with the Ineffable' (*Theol.myst.* 5, Heil–Ritter 1991: 150). However, Maximus, in *Myst.* 21 on the *Sanctus*, does not employ this term but picks up two key terms Ps-Dionysius used to express the union with God. In the *Divine Names* it is a 'union beyond intellect' (ἕνωσις ὑπὲρ νοῦν) (De Andia 1996), and in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* it is a union 'with the One' (πρὸς ἕν): (p. 191)

> The profession '*One is Holy*' … represents the gathering and union beyond reason and understanding which will take place between those who have been mystically and wisely initiated by God and the mysterious oneness of the divine simplicity in the incorruptible age of the spiritual world.
>
> (*Myst*. 21, Boudignon 2011: 48; trans. Berthold 1985: 203)

Is this not an echo of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, where Ps-Dionysius writes:

> Every sacredly initiating operation draws our fragmented lives together into a one-like divinization. It forges a divine unity out of the divisions within us in us. It grants us communion and union with the One causing us to enter into communion and union with the One.
>
> (*Hier.eccl.* 3, Heil–Ritter 1991: 79; trans. Luibheid 1987: 209. 7–12)

For Maximus, that union will take place in the age to come.

Suggested Reading

On Ps-Dionysius:

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Maximus, *Capita theologica et oeconomica (Chapters on Theology and the Economy)* PG 90. 1084–1173, Berthold 1985: 129–80.

Maximus, *Mystagogia (Mystagogy)* PG 91. 658–718, Lot-Borodine 1963, Berthold 1985: 181–225, Sotiropoulos 1978, Boudignon 2011.

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Notes:

([1]) This expression is also found in the *Ambigua* of Maximus the Confessor (*Amb*. 6, PG 91. 1392A), and John of Damascus, *Exp. fidei* 25, Kotter 2010: 296. 126.

([2]) Cf. *Div.nom.* 5.6; Suchla 1990: 184–5.

Ysabel De Andia

Ysabel De Andia is director of research in ancient philosophy at the National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS), Paris.

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Mindset (γνώμη) in John Chrysostom

Raymond J. Laird

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Abstract and Keywords

The Greek term γνώμη is familiar to scholars studying the works of Maximus the Confessor, but has suffered neglect by those working on earlier Church Fathers. Even leading commentators on Maximus often give little note to Maximus' predecessors, especially John Chrysostom, who is sometimes numbered among those who used the term γνώμη to denote 'free consent' or 'opinion' or intention. This is not the prime way in which Chrysostom uses the term; rather, he employs it as 'mindset' in the same mode as the 'gnomic will' of Maximus, as a faculty of the soul that controls the will. This study, based on my analysis of more than 1,400 occurrences of γνώμη in Chrysostom's exegetical homilies, provides an introduction to this critical concept in Chrysostom's anthropology and demonstrates its relationships to other faculties of the psyche. The study also points to the source of Chrysostom's awareness of the significance of the term from Classical Greek *paideia*.

Keywords: John Chrysostom, soul, intention, gnomic will, mindset, Chrysostom's anthropology, psyche, paideia, exegesis

FOR what does God search in humankind? John Chrysostom, the Golden Mouth, had one comprehensive answer to that crucial question: a well-disposed mindset (γνώμη). In Chrysostom's exposition of Matthew 6: 28–34 where he speaks to a section of the Sermon on the Mount, he asserts that when God is approached in prayer, he does not look at things like reputation, standing, or the seeming worth of a person, but at that person's mindset. He claims that attendant circumstances, such as ancestry, are immaterial to the efficacy of prayer. Whether one is a Phoenician, or a Gentile dog, or a Jew, or an excessive sinner is of no consequence. Neither racial heritage nor sins bar the way to God. Things that give or deny people worth in the eyes of others do not give or deny access to the ear of God. No, Chrysostom argues, 'For God does not inspect a person's apparent worth, but their mindset (γνώμη)' (*Matt.* 22, PG 57. 306. 27–29). In this term, γνώμη, we encounter in Chrysostom's thought a power of the soul that is critical and central to the functioning of the human person. In his comment on access to God in prayer, it is evident that the γνώμη is understood by Chrysostom to be the critical faculty of the soul in divine–human relationships. Throughout the corpus of his homilies, in the issue of responsibility before God, the γνώμη is seen to be the faculty of the soul which is under constant divine appraisal. Furthermore, it is presented in his homilies as the main seat of autonomy or self-determination, and functions as the control centre of other faculties, including the faculty of moral choice (προαίρεσις). It is presented as being both the critical faculty in acceptance or rejection of the overtures of grace and truth, and the seat of culpability in the soul. When Chrysostom took up his pastoral ministry in Antioch, he dedicated his life to shaping this faculty in the people in his congregations. The inclusion of this chapter on John Chrysostom in a handbook on Maximus is justified by the similarity of attributes and functions ascribed to γνώμη by both Fathers. I propose that Chrysostom's homilies in some respects foreshadowed Maximus' dissertations in the seventh century.

(p. 195) What, then, is the signification of this term in Chrysostom's usage? To what faculty or power of the soul does it refer in his anthropology? It is used often by him, there being more than 1,400 occurrences in his corpus. It

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also has a long history in Hellenic literature, going back as far as the eighth century BCE to one small fragment from Hesiod, and to more substantial references in the writings of Theognis in the sixth century BCE, after which it appears frequently. Karavites, in surveying the usage of γνώμη and its signification in Greek literature up until the end of the fifth century BCE, remarked on its 'elasticity' (Karavites 1990: 10). It is imperative for this chapter to establish the signification of γνώμη as used by Chrysostom in the fifth century CE. My detailed examination of more than 800 occurrences in Chrysostom's homilies indicated that, generally, the meaning in his usage is best expressed by our English term 'mindset', allowing for nuances according to context.[1] In the search for confirmation or otherwise of this usage, recourse was made to possible sources of his vocabulary. This included the various influences upon his life: home, education, ascetic experience, the scriptures, especially the New Testament which he had committed to memory, and Diodore's *asketerion* or ministerial study group at Antioch. Among these, the Greek education system (*paideia*), which included a final four years of rhetorical training required for official imperial service, surfaced as the outstanding source, with the others being supplementary and/or confirmatory. A search of the writings of Aristotle, who regarded γνώμη as a faculty or power (δυνάμις) of the soul (*Ethica Nicomachea*, Bywater 1962: 1143a), Thucydides, Demosthenes, and Libanius yielded like results (Laird 2012: 135–91). Some other church Fathers, including Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus were given brief treatment which also supported my hypothesis. A more detailed search of the Antiochene theologians, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, produced further substantial confirmation (Laird 2012: 193–220). Two centuries after the Antiochenes, however, Maximus the Confessor used the term 'gnomic will'. Polycarp Sherwood, thinking that no single word in English was suitable for a definition of γνώμη as used by Maximus, suggested a circumlocution: 'a set tendency of the mind' (Sherwood 1955b: 58). As 'mindset' was hardly current in 1955, but has since become familiar in our common speech, the choice of mindset as translation for γνώμη in Chrysostom's usage seemed to me justified. Further confirmation came from another Maximus scholar, Lars Thunberg, who, in summarizing Maximus, defines his usage of the signification of γνώμη as 'a disposition or *habitus* of will, such as a man as individual and as fallen creature may establish for himself' (Thunberg 1995: 226). Thunberg refers to another defining passage in Maximus where it is explained as a 'mode of use (i.e. of the human faculty of willing) and not a principle of nature' (Thunberg 1995: 229). Expanding on this he continues:

> It is a mode of life, i.e. a personal and individual disposition (διάθεσις) or *habitus* (ἕξις), acquired through free human acts of decision, though always changeable. It (p. 196) thus belongs to the field of personal existence (ὕπαρξεις), though as such it stands in a constant relationship to the sphere of nature (φύσις).
>
> (Thunberg 1995: 229–30)

This fits Chrysostom's usage remarkably well, including the distinction of γνώμη from nature and natural will, although the focus on willing, which is common to many patristic commentators, does not take account of the far wider spread of functioning applied to γνώμη by Chrysostom. It will be claimed below that Chrysostom understood γνώμη as the mode (τρόπος) of the soul, and not merely of the will.

The Level of Mindset Relationships

Chrysostom's perception of the nature of the mindset[2] and its role in relationships is made apparent when he comments on the matter of Christian unity (Laird 2012: 34–8). He points to the nature of mindset harmony in his explanation of the division in the Corinthian church as addressed in the first letter from the apostle Paul to them. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 1: 10, Chrysostom discusses mind (νοῦς) and mindset, distinguishing clearly between them (*1 Cor.* 3, PG 61. 23. 7–28). He places the one over against the other, with νοῦς and its cognates applying to the thought processes, and γνώμη to a faculty of inner orientation that may be described as a habitual–mental– emotional–volitional control centre. At first, he asserts that Paul was looking for harmony of thought and not merely harmony of words. Then he goes a step further, indicating that it is possible to have harmony of mind or thought on some things but still lack it in others, thus falling short of true intellectual concord. He then takes another step to assert that there may even be harmony of thoughts or ideas on everything, but still not attain harmony of mindset. To illustrate, he points to the case where there is unity in faith but not in love, a situation he explains as: 'Thus there is a concord of ideas (for we think the same things), but that does not reach as far as the concord of mindset' (*1 Cor.* 3, PG 61. 23. 21–23). He understands νοῦς and its cognates as indicating perception or thought, that is, 'mind' in the sense of its function of rational discernment and the shaping of ideas. Also, γνώμη is

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understood as denoting an orientation of the being, an attitude of heart, a disposition of the soul. Thus faith in its sense of understanding of and intellectual commitment to a body of truth is attributed to the mind (νοῦς), whereas love, a holistic commitment of the person, belongs to the realm of the mindset. It is significant that he concludes by attributing the blame for the schisms at Corinth to a division of the mindset and not to differences of faith, that is, of doctrine. He asserts that this division or tearing apart in mindset comes from the human love of rivalry and contention (*1 Cor.* 3, PG 61. 23. 25–28), a clear indication of the presence or (p. 197) influence of passions in the mindset. Maximus speaks of separation through the deceit of the Devil in the beginning by turning humankind to the pursuit of pleasure, thereby separating us from God and from one another at this mindset level (*Ep.* 2, PG 91. 396D; Louth 1996: 87). It appears that both held that only when unity of mindset is attained can it be said that true heartfelt harmony is present. Both also point to the γνώμη as incorporating emotional and attitudinal elements as well as the intellectual, which is how mindset is understood in our day.

As a native of Antioch, Chrysostom was a product of the Greek *paideia* of his day. Not only was he familiar with the Greek classics as taught in the rhetorical schools, but had them embedded in his being (Constantelos 1991: 109–10). Libanius, the official rhetor of Antioch at that time, lists some of the authors studied by his former pupil Postumianus, a member of a noble Roman family. The list is typical of the curriculum of the rhetorical schools of Late Antiquity.

> You have filled your soul with Homer, Hesiod, and the rest of the poets, and Demosthenes, Lysias, and the rest of the orators. Herodotus, Thucydides, and all their company could claim that there is room for them too in your intellect, and as witness of this they could cite the many fine orations you have composed.
>
> (Libanius, *De sua vita*, Norman 1992/2: 403; see Norman 1964: 158, 168–9)

One element in a speech of Demosthenes (384–322 BCE), the politician-orator of classical Athens, demonstrates the affinity of linguistic culture between the two orators separated by almost a millennium in time (Laird 2012: 178–90). As indicated above, Chrysostom held that true unity in actions and collaboration in ventures is the province of the mindset. Demosthenes had worked with that principle in his attempts to unite the Athenian assembly in decisive action. He was well aware that something more than mere intellectual assent was required, that appeal to the intellect alone would fail to produce the desired solidarity of purpose and perseverance in resisting Athens' adversaries. When persuading the assembly to join forces in resisting Philip of Macedon, he called on them to do so 'with one passionate accord from one mindset' (Demos., *4 Phil.*, Butcher 1903: 59). The source of total accord for Demosthenes, of effective passionate united resistance, was to be found in the mindset, the faculty of the soul that has the capacity to combine both reason and passion in appropriate balance. In another speech, he cautioned the Athenians not to hold past grudges against the Thebans and thereby have them join with Philip in his invasion. If they went down that path, he asserted, 'with one mindset all will become Philip's allies (φιλιππισάντων)' (Demos., *De corona*, Butcher 1903: 176). In another call for unity of purpose and action, he asked the assembly for two things, first, 'oneness of mind' (ὁμόνοιαν), and second, 'from one mindset in the intentions of all to struggle together zealously in the contest' (Demos., *Ep.* 1. 5, Rennie 1931/3: 1462–92). Not only is the mindset distinguished from a decision made with the mind or reason, but there is also a patent need for an element of zeal to be present in the mindset so that the agreed intention could be carried out in the face of a powerful enemy. Athenian failures in the past had highlighted the disparity between mind in its thought processes and mindset in its habitual state wherein reason is modified for (p. 198) better or for worse by emotional elements such as fear or hope (Luginbill 1999: 57–65). Chrysostom, in his context, echoed Demosthenes' distinctions and his call for unity of mindset.

Authority and Autonomy

Chrysostom understood the mindset to be the ruling power in the soul. He argues that this hegemony of the mindset is a usurpation of the original divine intention that reasoning (λογισμός) should exercise that function (*1 Cor.* 7, PG 60. 58–61). The fall of reason resulted in a distortion in the soul that left an inferior faculty, the mindset, in control (Laird 2012: 247–51). Chrysostom's anthropology thus centres on the mindset, with its most critical function being authority. Other faculties and operations of the person come under its authority. These include the body and its members, conscience, desire or willing, the passions, and moral choice. Chrysostom understood the mindset to be endowed with such autonomy of authority that God respects it and does not put it under necessity. Every person

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has been endowed with an authoritative mindset and is responsible to God for its state and operation (Laird 2012: 73–83).

The body lies under the authority of the mindset. In a homily based on Romans 5: 5–18, Chrysostom compares a person's body with a suit of armour. Like the armour, it is by nature neutral: no charge can be laid against it. The controlling power over the body and its members is 'the mindset of the soul' (*Rom.* 11, PG 60. 487. 5–9). The body becomes a weapon for good or evil, as the mindset determines. Hence we find, as Chrysostom continues with the metaphor, that he calls for strong armour, a noble mindset, a good knowledge of warfare, and a commander (*Rom.* 11, PG 60. 487. 39–42). He asserts that for the body to function as intended by the divine commander, the controlling faculty—the mindset—must be appropriately conditioned. The required state proposed for such a mindset is high-born or noble (γενναῖας), one of superior values in bearing and thought. This is a necessity for the controlling faculty of the body which must act within the accepted norms of the highest status in the prevailing culture. In the case of the Christian, the virtues to be displayed are those congruent with the royal calling to reign with Christ.

The mindset also controls the effect of the conscience (συνειδός). Chrysostom, in an extended treatment of the law as discussed by the apostle Paul in Romans 7: 14, makes the point that, in practice, conscience is subject to the whims and fancies of the mindset. It is when the mindset is in agreement with the law, as applied by the conscience, that the approval of the law, through conscience, is given (*Rom.* 13, PG 60. 510. 32–36). He asserts that the knowledge of good and evil is a God-given foundational part of the nature of our inner beings (*Rom.* 13, PG 60. 510. 36–39). This he equates with 'the law of my mind (νοῦς)' (*Rom.* 13, PG 60. 511. 13–15). This innate law long preceded the law of Moses, which in Chrysostom's thinking appears to be a more severe external expression of the innate phenomenon. He argues that the law of Moses, in company with the conscience, pleads (p. 199) with and increases the intensity of the desire or preference (βούλημα) to do what is good. Desire, however, is subject to and shaped by the mindset. If the mindset enthusiastically agrees with law-conscience, it is praised by the law. The mindset is the faculty which is commended for placing desire on the side of the law and thus on the side of conscience. The mindset therefore, in his thought, has authority in the free human psyche, not only over desire but also over conscience, in the sense that it is the mindset and not conscience which has the last word. It is the final internal human arbiter of the free soul.

It is clear from the same passage that Chrysostom understood the mindset to have authority over desire or will, as expressed there by βούλημα. In this homily, we see that Chrysostom, akin to Maximus, distinguishes between God-given desire or natural willing (βούλησις ἔμφυτος), and the moral choice (προαίρεσις) which he defines as 'a motion (κίνησις) from ourselves towards whatever we might wish to pursue' (*Rom.* 13, PG 60. 510. 25–28). The moral choice is further explained as our own willing which originates within the mindset (*Rom.* 13, PG 60. 510. 28–29). Thus, moral choice and desire are controlled by the mindset. A desire or wish is determined by the mindset and then put into effect by the moral choice. This choice may or may not be in harmony with natural God-given desire because the outcome depends upon the state or disposition of the mindset. This authority over choice is also applied here to another of the choosing verbs, αἱρέω, in its middle form, ἑλέσθαι, meaning 'to take for oneself, to choose' (Liddell et al. 1996: 41–2, *s.v.* αἱρέω). It is argued that choosing to yield to the better or the worse is a function of the authoritative mindset (*Rom.* 13, PG 60. 518. 23–27).

Chrysostom was also clear in his conviction that the mindset has final command over the passions. This is addressed in an extended and lively discussion arising from Romans 3: 31 on the sin of jealousy as it relates to a person's attitude to fellow-Christians who have been awarded some honour. Chrysostom concludes that jealousy is worse than warfare. Among the reasons he gives is that often there is a reasonable cause to commit to war, whereas jealousy 'is always nothing but madness and a satanic mindset' (*Rom.* 7, PG 60. 449. 27–29). These are strong words which put the onus squarely upon a distorted mindset as the cause of the mania. Chrysostom is intense in his language of condemnation, asserting that the jealous mindset is much worse in its destructive poison than any venomous reptile or insect. He blames it for a plethora of crimes, such as the slaying of Abel, the overthrow of churches, and the begetting of heresies (*Rom.* 7, PG 60. 449. 33–36). There is no doubting as to where Chrysostom looked for the cause of this terrible scourge. As he continued to discourse on the theme, he turned to speak directly of Satan and laid the ultimate guilt upon 'the insatiable mindset of the devil' (*Rom.* 7, PG 60. 450. 10–13). The cause is traced to the controlling mindsets of Satan and of the human agents who give rein to jealousy in their souls.

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Chrysostom understood the mindset to be endowed with autonomy, which in his thought is a significant element of its authority (Laird 2012: 85–112). In commenting on the sovereignty of God, as in the image of the divine potter of Romans 9: 20–2, he stresses that the use and application of this metaphor does not imply the elimination of human self-determination or freedom of choice (αὐτεξούσιος) (*Rom.* 16, PG 60. 559. 13–14; see Aland 1999: 280). He places autonomy with the mindset by asserting that (p. 200) God's authority over the human clay does not entail any necessity or force over the mindset (*Rom.* 16, PG 60. 559. 34–39). Indeed, if this were so, he argues, it would involve God in the moral creation of both good and evil persons, thus absolving them of all responsibility for their attitudes and actions (*Rom.* 16, PG 60. 559. 41–43). Chrysostom is avowing God's respect for the autonomy of each person, an autonomy which underlies the authority of the mindset. In *Hom.* 19, when explaining the consequences of the unbelief that breaks a branch off the tree of divine election, Chrysostom acclaims the greatness of the authority of both the moral choice and the mindset. He says, 'Do you see how great is the mastery of the moral choice? How great is the authority of the mindset?' (*Rom.* 19, PG 60. 590. 29–32). The text underlines the authoritative nature of the mindset in that good and evil are not immutable qualities of our beings, but are dependent upon the mindset and the choice that flows from it. This authority of the mindset is again stated in a passage of *Hom.* 26, where Chrysostom encourages his people to pay attention to the things of the Spirit rather than to be focussed upon the things of the world. He presents examples from both Old and New Testaments of those who walked that Spirit-led path. Then, in case the mention of such great models might have the unwanted effect of discouragement, he tells them not to be troubled but to remember 'that in all cases authority belongs to their mindset' (*Rom.* 26, PG 60. 642. 32–35). The ability to do what is required lies with them, in their own autonomous and authoritative mindset.

What may look confusing in this schema is that Chrysostom not only applies autonomy to the mindset (*Gen.* 20, PG 53. 169. 57; *Perf.car.*, PG 56. 283. 42), but also to humankind in other ways. Often, the reference is general and is identified simply with our person.[3] Similarly, he often speaks of our nature (φύσις) being created by God with this attribute.[4] On occasion, the moral choice is mentioned as being self-determining (*Gen.* 14, PG 53. 117. 20; *1 Cor.* 29, PG 61. 247. 36–37). It is also applied to the will or wish (βούλησις) (*Heb.* 12, PG 63. 99. 41–42). There is no need to discuss the general references to person and nature, but those where the particular faculties of moral choice, desire, and mindset come into focus are of concern. A preliminary observation is that these terms share in the divinely endowed freedom from necessity, and denote an accompanying moral responsibility. This is certainly the case in the contexts in which Chrysostom uses them. That they may be gathered up under autonomy (αὐτεξούσιος) by Chrysostom, as noted above, is sufficient to make the point. All have some bearing upon what is desired and how that may be gained within the bounds of the moral limitations already acceptable to the person, or required by an acknowledged higher authority. In that sense they share the self-determination endowed upon the soul, but that is qualified by the relationships between them.

(p. 201) A clear indication of the relationship between the self-determination of the soul and the mindset, as Chrysostom understood it, is found in his homilies on baptism. The passage translates:

> For this is the greatest sure sign of his [God's] wisdom and his inexpressible loving-kindness, that he entrusted to us the care of the greater element in us; I refer to the soul. He teaches us through his works that he made us to be autonomous (αὐτεξουσίους) and left it to be up to us (ἐφ'ἡμῖν), that is to our mindset, both to choose virtue or to desert towards evil.
>
> (*Cat. ad illum.* 8. 22, Wenger 1970: 258–9)

Here the mindset is identified as the faculty in which the self-determination of the person is operational. It is the mindset that has been endowed with autonomy and upon which rests responsibility for the choices that are made. This is also seen in a homily on Genesis where he states that 'God has created our mindset self-determining' (*Gen.* 20, PG 53. 169. 57). It is clear from the remainder of that passage that the mindset is both free and responsible for one's choices. The contrast between being slothful or sober-minded, depicted by Chrysostom as possible states of the mindset, denotes that the mindset is the autonomous faculty responsible for the choice of virtuous or evil paths.

All the capacities of the soul to which Chrysostom attached autonomy are, in his schema, vitally related to the mindset. As noted from the baptism homily, this applies to ἐφ' ἡμῖν, 'up to us' (Laird 2012: 91–4), a term which has a long history in Greek philosophy, reaching back to Aristotle (*Ethica Nicomachea* 3. 5, Bywater 1962: 1113b3–15a3). It is prominent in the Stoics, as in Epictetus (55–135 CE) (*Enchiridion*, Schenkl 1965: 1. 1–2; see Bobzien

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1998: 330–43); the neo-Aristotelian Alexander of Aphrodisias (*fl.* 200 CE) (*De fato* 3, Bruns 1892: 205); and the neo-Platonist Plotinus (204–70 CE) (*Enn.* 6. 8. 1–6, Henry and Schwyzer 1973). Chrysostom also applies the mindset to his frequently-used phrase: 'bringing our contribution' (τὰ παρ' ἑαυτῶν εἰσφέρειν) (*Cat. ad illum.* 1. 19, 2. 1, 4. 10, 4. 11, 4. 31, 5. 19, 7. 4, 7. 24). Harkins renders this phrase in his translation of these homilies as 'bringing our fair share' (Harkins 1963: 30), which certainly highlights both freedom and responsibility, but may put too much weight on the human contribution as Chrysostom understood it. Nevertheless, this concept represents a crucial element of what is brought to God in the processes of salvation and is presented as being dependent upon the state of the mindset (Laird 2012: 94–101). The moral choice (προαίρεσις) is somewhat of a partner in self-determination with the mindset, but important as it is in the paradigm of divine–human relationships, it is both derivative from and dependent upon the mindset (Laird 2012: 101–11, 235–8). These facets cannot be pursued in detail here, but direct and indirect application of the term αὐτεξούσιος, 'self-determining' or 'autonomous', is instructive. It is made in a way that compels acknowledgement that Chrysostom understood the mindset to be the master of those inner capacities which are the vehicles of expression of the feature that gives humankind its great dignity and unique position in the economy of God.

(p. 202) **Culpability and Responsibility: Sin and Grace**

Chrysostom asserted that the mindset was responsible for making evil choices on one hand, and for responding positively to grace on the other (Laird 2012: 239–47). In a homily on Cain and Abel that opens with a discussion of the soul affected by sin under the image of incurable wounds, the relevant powers of the soul come into view in their interaction (*Gen.* 19, PG 53. 158–160). The soul does not respond to any remedy whatsoever, the problem being not a lack of ability but a lack of will or desire towards a particular object or goal. The faculty of moral choice, which is not permanently stationary but can change, needs to play its part. God exhorts and advises us in the depth of our intellect (διάνοια), but the mindset is the determining faculty: '[God] leaves everything to rest upon the mindset of the one who is sick' (*Gen.* 19, PG 53. 159. 4–5). For Cain, when challenged by God, the choice was between repentant confession and flagrant disregard of God. Directed by his mindset, he made an evil choice, thus adding further wounds to his condition, damaging his mindset even more, shaping it further from love of and obedience to God. It became more firmly entrenched in its sinful condition of self-love as evidenced in his reply to God: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' (Gen. 4: 9).

Chrysostom asserts that troubles and afflictions cannot be blamed for human waywardness, especially as they are often intended to teach us dependence upon God. Here again he uses the medical image: in the case of someone with a weak stomach who cannot take a particular medicine because it would only make things worse, the medicine is not the problem. So, he concludes, in the issue of sin the troubles are not the real problem: the fault lies in the weakness or passivity (εὐκολία) of the mindset (*Rom.* 9, PG 60. 473. 11–15). The image here is of the mindset lying content in its sinful disposition and making no response to the grace of God in providential circumstances. There is no doubting where the accountability for sin lies, according to Chrysostom. There is no valid alibi that may be used wherewith to shift responsibility to any external cause. As for the faculties of the soul, culpability lies with the mindset.

A comment on the offering of Abel in *Hom.* 18 on Genesis is significant. There Chrysostom reminds us 'that our Lord does not acknowledge differences in personal appearances, but that from scrutinizing the moral choice (προαίρεσις), he rewards the mindset' (*Gen.* 18, PG 53. 154. 37–40). More precisely, God scrutinizes the moral choice as his ground for judgement, and the reward goes to the mindset which determined the moral choice to be disposed in a certain direction. The importance of the mindset in this regard is underlined in a comment that it was the difference in mindset that determined the acceptance or otherwise of the brothers' offerings (*Gen.* 18, PG 53. 155. 28). The text indicates that in the case of Cain the disposition of his mindset issued in indifference or sloth (ῥᾳθυμία) in the faculty of choice. As far as Chrysostom (p. 203) was concerned, sloth was always an imminent danger and almost the ultimate sin (Hill 2004: 18–19; 1988: 74–5). In this passage, salvation itself is betrayed and punishment merited by such an attitude. The mindset is critical in the assessment. In contrast, Chrysostom sums up what is meant by God's taking notice of Abel's offering as 'he welcomed, he applauded the mindset, he crowned the choice' (*Gen.* 18, PG 53. 155. 38–40). Chrysostom's imagery of a great public celebration is as inspiring as it is instructive. He elaborates on this theme, twice mentioning the state of the mindset as the reason for God's interest in both the one who offered and the offerings: 'Therefore God looked upon him [Abel] because he made his offering with a healthy mindset …' (*Gen.*18, PG 53. 155. 48–51). It is a healthy mindset (γνώμη) that captured God's

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interest and approval. Chrysostom presses home his theme, referring to Abel as having a morally upright mindset (ὀρθὴ γνώμη), along with a pure intention (*Gen.*18, PG 53. 155. 56–59). Then again, sacred scripture, Chrysostom states, teaches us that 'the disposition of the mindset is the only thing for which the Lord seeks' (*Gen.*18, PG 53. 156. 13). Chrysostom then has God addressing Cain telling him the same thing: 'Do you not see that I was in no need of the offerings, but of the healthy mindset of those bringing offerings?' (*Gen.* 18, PG 53. 157. 1–4). In true rhetorical form, by re-enacting and interpreting this conversation between God and Cain, in which God points to the respective mindsets of the brothers as the key to divine acceptance or rejection, he specifies the particular function of their mindsets under examination. Cain's mindset failed to calculate the difference in the offerings to be made, whereas Abel's mindset demonstrated great precision in making the distinction. Chrysostom uses an image from archery to describe Abel's mindset: 'straight and hitting the mark' (ὀρθή τε τυγχάνουσα) (*Gen.* 18, PG 53. 157. 15–17). Here, in Abel's mindset, was an instrument that was finely shaped and balanced for its task of discrimination. On the contrary, Cain's mindset was, by inference, out of true and missing the mark. Cain was rejected because his mindset was not truly shaped; it was not righteously disposed (*Gen.* 18, PG 53. 157. 43–44). Chrysostom states that God honoured the mindset of Abel by calling his offerings gifts. It is evident from the examination of this homily that Chrysostom viewed the mindset as critical in divine–human relationships. He saw it functioning as the faculty of the psyche responsible for discernment and for directing the crucial choices in life. As such it comes under the sifting gaze of the Almighty who praises or condemns these internal dispositions of humankind.

An illuminating comment by Chrysostom with reference to the grace of God is found in a comment on Noah. Chrysostom suggests that Noah, by directing his thinking to focus on God and to ignore those who mocked him, 'got the better of everyone because he had displayed his own contribution and attracted (ἐπισπασάμενος) the grace that comes from above' (*Gen.* 23, PG 53. 200. 2). The participle which I have translated as 'attracted' contains the idea of dragging out or drawing forth. Chrysostom's emphasis is upon the need for the person to order his/her attitude in a manner that would not only make it receptive to the overtures of grace, but also draw grace out from God. This passage also provides an important link between our contribution and the mindset. In this homily Chrysostom continues to sing the praises of Noah as the (p. 204) one who 'found grace in the eyes of the one who haunts the heart[5] and who approved his mindset' (*Gen.* 23, PG 53. 200. 7–10; Hill 1990: 93). This allusion to the tutelary deities of Graeco-Roman religion illustrates his point, for these imaginary beings were regarded as guardian spirits and patrons of places, homes, and the people therein. Consequently, they received the devotion and allegiance of the members of the household. Chrysostom asserts that the living God frequents the heart of the person as its sacred owner in order to inspect the mindset (γνώμη) which stores and directs our contribution. God visits the heart to ascertain the condition of the mindset to see if it is suitable to attract God's grace.

The structure of *Hom.* 27 on Genesis is particularly relevant at the point where Chrysostom comments on the instructions given to Noah after the Flood (Laird 2012: 53–72). It marks the transition from the discussion of the righteous Noah drawing grace from a generous God, and widens out to explain God's care for and generosity to humankind in the content and intention of those instructions. He explains the text not only as evidence of the generous love of God, but also as warning of the danger that besets humankind in the tendency to harbour and express a murderous mindset (φονικὴ γνώμη). From there he narrows the application to any individual in his congregation who bears a grudge against a neighbour, a point he powerfully illustrates by use of the parable of the wicked servant. At the heart of this discussion looms the fearsome shadow of the murderous mindset, something which he suggests has been a permanent feature of humankind both before and after the Flood. In following his argument, we see that Chrysostom, in considering the promise of God never again to curse the earth, takes up the statement of Genesis 8: 21 in the LXX: 'from youth humankind's thinking (διάνοια) is fully wrapped up securely in evil' (*Gen*. 27, PG 53. 244. 25–26). So important does he think this text to be in emphasizing God's ongoing love in the face of ongoing depravity that he repeats it twice more (*Gen*. 27, PG 53. 244. 51–54). This focus continues, with a reference to God giving these instructions as a restraint to the impulse (ὁρμή) to murder (*Gen*. 27, PG 53. 246. 16–17). Then, enumerating a number of restraining factors which must be resisted and ignored by a person in the pursuit of homicide, he makes an appeal based upon the essential dignity of humankind as created in the image of God and as his vice-regent over creation. The appeal is made to any who may have hostile thoughts towards another: 'Cease from your depraved mindset' (*Gen*. 27, PG 53. 246. 38–41). Chrysostom claims that God gave these promises and instructions to Noah to restrain humankind's murderous mindset so that God's purpose for humankind to populate, control, and enjoy the earth might be fulfilled (*Gen.* 27, PG 53. 246. 58–247. 2). This murderous mindset is then portrayed in Chrysostom's exposition of the parable of the wicked servant. His treatment

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of this parable takes up much of the latter part of the homily and culminates in the dramatic cry: 'O what extremity of insolence (ἀγνωμοσύνης)' (*Gen.* 27, PG 53. (p. 205) 249. 4–5), here using a cognate of γνώμη which expresses arrogance and utter disdain for the rights of others.

Chrysostom bases his assumption of what appears to be the inherent depravity of the mindset upon the LXX text of Genesis 8: 21. This is evident when, after the initial discussion stemming from the text, he returns to make the following observation:

> See how he [God] signified that because of their depravity he had brought the curse upon the earth. Then, lest we might think that they had changed for the better, and that it was because of this that he had made this promise, he said, 'from youth humankind's thinking is fully wrapped up securely in evil'.
>
> (*Gen.* 27, PG 53. 244. 47–52)

Chrysostom asserts that humankind was the same, and would remain the same, after the holocaust as before it: possessing a tendency towards evil in its worst form. In order for this evil to be restrained, special grace, here in the form of basic law, was required so that humankind would neither be destroyed by divine judgement nor destroy itself in endemic homicide. God provided grace at that time in the promises and instructions that he gave to Noah and his family. This tendency towards evil is identified by Chrysostom as the depraved and murderous mindset, which strongly suggests that Chrysostom's theological anthropology included the concept of a mindset that had been depraved since the Fall.

It is important to note that Chrysostom is not referring to depravity of nature (φύσις). A basic element in his anthropology is the distinction he makes between nature and mindset. In an explanation of Matthew 18: 7, on the topic of offences, Chrysostom devotes a sizeable portion of his homily to discussing the cause of good and evil (*Matt.* 59, PG 58. 574–578). His argument may be summarized as follows: virtue and vice are either of the mindset or of nature; as nature is unchangeable, and virtue and vice are not so, they must be from the autonomous mindset and the moral choice. Elsewhere, Chrysostom makes the same point in question form: 'Do you see how deeds of virtue and evil do not reside in our nature, but in the moral choice of our mindset?' (*Gen.* 31, PG 53. 290. 65–67). There is no room to doubt Chrysostom's view as to the faculty of the soul that bears the weight of culpability for sin and the responsibility to receive grace.

Development

It is logical that Chrysostom, with his understanding of the operations of the soul, would be committed to shaping, or rather re-shaping, the mindsets of his people. Indeed, he viewed the church as 'the medical clinic of the spirit' (*Gen.* 1, PG 53. 22. 9–12), and as a spiritual school (*Matt*. 17, PG 57. 264. 25–26) with his preaching as a significant vehicle of Christian education (Maxwell 2006: 88–117). This points to the existence of an (p. 206) alternative *paideia* to that of the pagan Greek educational system, a Christian *paideia* that Frances Young calls 'a process of personal, social—indeed global—transformation effected by getting to know God and being reunited in the divine life' (Young 1993: 281). The mindset was central to that process in Chrysostom's anthropology and in his educational endeavours. A brief consideration of its capacity for development and the instruments that Chrysostom employed to condition it follows (Laird 2012: 113–34).

The failure of the Jews to respond to the messianic claims of Jesus, Chrysostom claimed, was the due to the contention-loving condition of the Jews' mindset that was 'incurable and hard to alter' (*Rom.* 19, PG 60. 584. 19–23). This he derived from the metaphor of sleep, stupor, or lethargy that is used in the text of Romans 11: 8. He describes this mindset-led lethargy as 'the worst habit of the soul when it is in this incurable and unfeeling state' (*Rom.* 19, PG 60. 584. 10–12). The first thing to note is the assertion that the mindset is a habit (ἕξις) of the soul. It is the faculty in which habits are formed and solidified until they become salient features of a person's character and attitudes. The second is the development feature of the mindset as is implied in a habit. Although suffering some distortion, the mindset is not in a once-for-all fixed state but one that develops with time and experience. As this passage indicates, it may reach a state when it becomes fixed enough to be hard to alter, but that is the result of the process, not the starting-point. The question then arises: if the mindset is subject to development or change, what are the factors that effect change? Chrysostom had great confidence in the power of the Gospel to change those who heard it. Commenting upon Isaiah's prophecy that the salvation of God would reach out to the Gentiles,

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he stated that the prophet was 'everywhere declaring that the power and the knowledge of these our Gospels will be poured out to the ends of the world, converting the human race from a brutish manner and a hardened mindset into a very gentle and tender people' (*Matt*. 10, PG 57. 188. 5–10).

This indicates that Chrysostom understood the mindset of the race to have been perverted and to some extent set in that distorted state, requiring the application of the power and knowledge of the Gospel for it to change for the better. In general, Chrysostom's approach is that it is able to develop and change, to move from an immature stage to one that is fully developed and set in its love for God and neighbour. In a comment on the ministry of John the Baptist, he differentiates between the crowds who were being baptized and the Pharisees observing the event by pointing to their respective mindsets. He describes the people as having an 'unshaped' or 'unmoulded' mindset (*Matt.* 11, PG 57. 193. 2–3). Their mindset had not yet reached its settled form. It had not yet hardened so as to become impervious to the truth. This was distinctly different to that of the Pharisees who were resistant to the required change, as evidenced in their desire to seize John. Chrysostom is explicit: 'The people came with one mindset and the Pharisees with another' (*Matt.* 11, PG 57. 193. 11–12). In a comment on Galatians, Chrysostom interprets Paul's use of 'infant' (νήπιος) as referring to the mindset and not to physical age (*Gal*., PG 61. 657. 10–12). Mindset, then, may be used in reference to the degree of maturity attained by a person. Chrysostom described the mindset of the Galatians in this passage as being 'more infantile' (*Gal*., PG 61. 657. 12–15). In this particular instance, in Chrysostom's thought, childishness is expressed by submission to new moons and Sabbaths, the elements of the cosmos, a pre-occupation with the shadows (p. 207) of the past rather than with the present substance of the faith. It is possible, he asserts, to have an infantile mindset or to have one that appreciates that we now live 'in the time of the age of maturity' (*Gal*., PG 61. 657. 17). The context indicates that he is comparing their pre-Christian existence with their Christian experience, against the background of the dispensational change which occurred with the Incarnation. Those of the past age or dispensation had an excuse for their immaturity. Those who live post-Incarnation do not, hence the epithet 'more infantile'. He continues by asserting that all who are in Christ, by virtue of their divine adoption, have by the grace of God already experienced a massive move in status and outlook. To them he throws out the challenge: 'If, then, grace has made us freedmen instead of slaves, mature instead of infantile, heirs and sons instead of aliens, how is it not absurd, and indicative of extreme insolence, to cut loose from this grace, and turn around and go backwards?' (*Gal*., PG 61. 657. 43–45).

Chrysostom was concerned to see his people grow in faith and love, which he viewed as a process of continuous change in the mindset in conformity to Christ. In his fourth homily on Matthew he addresses the need for transformation in his hearers' mindset (*Matt.* 4, PG 57. 50. 4–6). Of particular concern to him is the destructive power of anger which he pictures first as a lion tearing its prey, then as a snake (not merely worms) eating away their innards. He asserts that, as there is a potion that is effective in killing worms, so also is there a powerful potion that will kill these snakes which engulf our vital inner life. This potion, which he declares can extinguish every disease and is basic to change in the mindset, is the blood or sacrifice of Christ (*Matt.* 4, PG 57. 50. 34–37). In fact, Chrysostom points to a number of instruments by which the necessary change can be effected. The blood of Christ stands at the head of a list which includes the divine scriptures and almsgiving (*Matt.* 4, PG 57. 50. 37–39). According to Chrysostom, they constitute a powerful triumvirate that 'will enable us to put to death the passions that abuse our soul' (*Matt.* 4, PG 57. 50. 39–41). There are more such instruments of change and shaping put forward by him: preaching, primarily the exposition and application of scripture, prayer, and the remembrance of our sins. This latter discipline he presents as a form of ongoing repentance. These transforming agents will render the mindset right (ὀρθός), setting it at its correct tension (τόνος), like a tuned lyre, thus enabling it to function as divinely intended. Four of these instruments are given brief treatment below.

The blood of Christ is put at the head because it stands at the heart of the faith and as the basis of the believer's salvation. Chrysostom waxes lyrical when referring to the blood: it washes from sins; makes heaven accessible; brings us into the family of God; produces the image of our King within us; does not allow the nobility of our souls to wither; continuously waters and feeds our souls; drives away demons and keeps them at bay; leads us into friendship with Christ; brightens our mind; and makes our soul more lustrous than gold (*Joan*. 46, PG 59. 261. 11–41). Much of this is spoken of the Eucharist as the means by which the benefits of Christ's sacrifice are conveyed to the faithful participant. The Eucharist was the direct link to the cross itself or, even more to the point, to Christ himself, as the one who died for us and imparts his life to us. Thus the initial application of the sacrifice of Christ to the soul was to be followed by regular application through the Eucharist. This, in Chrysostom's judgement, provides the major shaping factor of the mindset.

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(p. 208) The scriptures are the second element of Chrysostom's instruments of transformation. In the fourth homily on Matthew, in the lead into the wild beast passage, he refers to the scriptures as a great instrument for effecting change in the mindset. Comparing them to the hairdresser's mirror, he asserts that one has only to look into them to discover one's own moral ugliness and the way to be set free from that deformity (*Matt.* 4, PG 57. 49. 32–34). The scriptures, he insists, 'not only point out our deformity but, if we are willing, also transpose it into extraordinary beauty' (*Matt.* 4, PG 57. 49. 27–29).

Allied to the scriptures in Chrysostom's methodology was preaching. He had no doubts that the mindset could be reached and grasped by compelling preaching. The persuasive presentation of ideas to the minds of the hearers would accomplish the desired result, as Robert (Charles) Hill in contrasting him with other Antiochenes writes: 'These pastors clearly did not see—or at least speak of—their pen fulfilling the role that Chrysostom's tongue did, a sail for the Spirit's breath to carry the believers forward on their journey' (Hill 2005: 186). Chrysostom urges his hearers to attend to his words. They need to change their basic thinking, something they may do by heeding what he has to say. In applying this, he points to their mindset, convinced that his teaching is the instrument which can change their mindset and rid it of its distortion (*2 Tim.* 2, PG 62. 612. 58–61). A related matter, in a comment on the apostle Paul, is found in a homily on Genesis. There Chrysostom observes that a particular mindset was produced by the discernment of an underlying purpose to an event in Paul's experience (*Gen.* 27, PG 53. 225. 56). His subsequent mindset is determined not so much by the event itself, but by his understanding of this underlying cause. It is the assumption Paul made, his thinking on the possible cause or purpose of the event, that shaped his mindset to face what lay ahead. Here the thinking faculty is closely associated with the mindset. What one thinks about an event becomes determinate for one's thinking and approach to life in the future. The point here is that, in Chrysostom's understanding, whatever impacts upon our thinking is instrumental in changing our mindset. This is why Chrysostom was a dedicated preacher: people needed to be taught well in the scriptures so that their reflections on their experiences would be guided to make an appropriate impact on their mindset. Both the teaching received and one's reflections on events in the light of the scriptures are shining examples of formative factors of the mindset.

Almsgiving was mentioned as another instrument by which change in the mindset could be effected. Chrysostom spoke frequently and at length on almsgiving. Here again is a topic about which, in the context of repentance, he becomes somewhat lyrical: 'I specifically mean almsgiving, the queen of virtues, the very best advocate, which quickly raises people to the triumphal arches of heaven' (*Paen.*3, PG 49. 293. 9–12). Almsgiving is presented as one of the roads to repentance. Here is where words become deeds, where the state of mindset is observed in a very practical and obvious way. Overall, Chrysostom gives it a very positive role in the Christian life, seeing it as a vital part of training for repentance (*Paen.*3, PG 49. 292. 34–35). As repentance (μετάνοια) refers to a change of mind, the claim that almsgiving is a factor in changing the mindset as progress towards the likeness of God is well warranted (Christo 1998: xiv). Almsgiving, as representative of altruistic action that protects us from the hardening of self-centredness in our beings, was seen as a crucial element in shaping the mindset.

(p. 209) Conclusion: John Chrysostom, a Substantial Predecessor of Maximus the Confessor

Chrysostom held that whatever has significant impact upon the mind, conscience, or affections is effective in producing change in the mindset. He understood that this capacity for mindset change works in both directions, towards God in concord with our nature, or away from God when, in self-love, we are captive to our passions. It is fitting to conclude this chapter with a familiar word from Maximus which could readily summarize the mindset of Chrysostom and the essence of his ministry: 'Only God is good by nature; only the imitator of God is good by mindset' *(Car.* 4. 90). It is relevant to this handbook that something more than the mere seeds of a doctrine of gnomic emigration, so clearly delineated by Maximus in his dissertations, should be found planted, growing, and bearing fruit in and through the homilies of John Chrysostom. Just as Chrysostom viewed the mindset as bearing the weight of culpability for sin, so did Maximus. As Chrysostom understood the mindset to be the faculty of response to the overtures of the grace of God, likewise did Maximus. As Chrysostom recognized the mindset to be the critical vehicle of development in God-likeness, so did Maximus. Chrysostom considered it to be the faculty critical to human destiny, as did Maximus.

Suggested Reading

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There is little in the writings of patristic scholars on the usage of mindset (γνώμη) in John Chrysostom. A basic text is Nowak (1972), although in my opinion he makes an error in making γνώμη an aspect of προαίρεσις rather than the reverse. Nevertheless, there is much profit to be had from this work. Most commentators on the Greek Fathers focussed upon the will or moral choice (προαίρεσις) to the neglect of γνώμη until it was seen to be a critical concept in the work of Maximus the Confessor. The works of classical scholars are more rewarding, probably due to their familiarity with Thucydides who exalts γνώμη to central importance (Jones and Powell, 1942: 1.140.1). In Karavites' perceptive article (1990), a contextual analysis of the various occurrences of this term enables him to come to well-supported conclusions. His survey is reasonably thorough and gives special attention to the historians Herodotus (484–425 BCE) and Thucydides (460–395 BCE). Greek historians in general made more use of γνώμη than most ancient Greek authors, apart from rhetoricians. It would be useful to dip into the works of Thucydides and Demosthenes to gain a sense of the signification and importance of this term. Two invaluable works by the French scholar Huart discuss vital features of γνώμη in an important part of the literature fundamental to Chrysostom's education (Huart 1968 and 1973). Other useful discussions are to be found in Luginbill (1999) and Edmunds (1975). Finally, my monograph (Laird 2012) on the usage of γνώμη in Chrysostom gives a thorough coverage of the topic, and readers familiar with Maximus will detect both similarities with and differences from his views.

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Notes:

([1]) Much of this chapter is comprised of revised portions from my monograph (Laird 2012).

([2]) Mindset, whenever used in this chapter, is to be understood as referring to γνώμη.

([3]) *Matt.* 45, PG 58. 471. 34; *Joan*. 10, PG 59. 76. 27; *2 Tim*. 8, PG 62. 647. 28.

([4]) *Gen.* 19, PG 53. 158. 58–59; *Gen.* 22, PG 53. 187. 6; *Gen.* 23, PG 53. 204. 48–49.

([5]) I am indebted to Charles Hill for encouraging the translation of ἐμβατεύω as 'haunt' in this context. See his translation at Hill 1990: 96.

Raymond J. Laird

Raymond J. Laird is an honorary fellow of the Centre for Early Christian Studies, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane.

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Augustine on the Will

Johannes Börjesson

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Abstract and Keywords

The question of whether Maximus the Confessor knew of Augustine of Hippo has long interested Maximian scholars. Maximus' lengthy stay in the West, together with similarities in the teaching of these two Fathers, has raised the question. Some scholars have been sceptical about any knowledge of Augustine on Maximus' part, and have questioned the likely extent and impact of such knowledge, if indeed it existed. Others have pointed to similarities in thought between the two, while recognizing that an assimilation of Augustinian ideas by Maximus is unlikely. It is primarily the link between the two authors on the locus of the will that this chapter aims to explore further. Börjesson will show that, even though it is unlikely that Augustine's works directly informed Maximus' theology, Maximus and his monks were aware of certain passages from Augustine and interpreted these in light of their own teaching.

Keywords: Augustine of Hippo, locus of the will, theology, will

THE question of whether Maximus the Confessor knew of Augustine of Hippo has often been addressed by Maximian scholars.[1] Maximus' long stay in the West, together with similarities in the teaching of these two Fathers, has raised the question. Often it has remained an open question, with the recognition that more research is needed or that no evidence has yet been submitted (von Balthasar 1961: 13; Thunberg 1995: 237; Pelikan 1982: 399). Some scholars have been sceptical about any knowledge of Augustine on Maximus' part, and have questioned the likely extent and impact of such knowledge, if indeed it existed (Louth 1997: 340; Larchet 1998: 39–44, 121–2). Others have pointed to similarities in thought between the two, while recognizing that an assimilation of Augustinian ideas by Maximus is unlikely. Wilken (1998) considered similarities in such issues as the origin, neutrality, and positive use of the passions; the interlocution of knowledge and love; the summary of the virtues in love; and love understood as desire. Neil (2003) looked at Augustine's and Maximus' accounts of the will and the passions in the healing of humankind under grace. She suggested similarities in the relationship of passions to the rational parts of the soul, and their neutral position and possible good use. In addition, she recognized the two theologians' definitions of the will as 'a God-given power to move towards or away from God' (p. 271). McFarland (2010, 2015) explored tensions in Augustine's and Maximus' notions both of the Fall and of the will. Haynes (2011) compared Augustine and Maximus on original sin, treating such topics as their notions of the *imago dei*, of sin, and of the event of the Fall and its consequences. Thunberg (1995: 237–9) saw similarities in Augustine's and Maximus' treatment of self-love, and might also be added to this group of scholars. He remained open to the idea that Maximus could have known of Augustine's teaching on this topic, but stated that this is 'very difficult to demonstrate' (1995: 237). However, almost all (p. 213) the texts to which Thunberg referred are from *Car.*, dated to *c.*626—before Maximus moved to the West—which makes a direct dependence on Augustine on Maximus' part less likely, in this case.

Nevertheless, others have answered the question of whether or not Maximus was familiar with the teaching of

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Augustine in the affirmative. In an article presented in 1982, George C. Berthold recognized that 'Maximus never quotes Augustine of Hippo or even refers to him by name', but argued, based on theological similarities, that Maximus probably knew and partly utilized Augustine's teaching on the procession of the Holy Spirit and Christ's freedom from original sin. Furthermore, Berthold pointed out themes from *Civ.Dei* that might have impacted on a number of Maximus' ideas, including his theology of history, and, from Book 22, his anti-Origenist exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15: 28 ('God may be all in all'), his notion of freedom, and his division of salvation history into certain epochs. In 2008, Brian Daley published an article in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, in which he, like Berthold, recognized the fact that there is no direct evidence of knowledge of Augustine in Maximus' writings. Nevertheless, he appreciated the suggestions made by Berthold and saw a necessity to 'reach deeply into the thought' of both Augustine and Maximus to prove a connection (2008: 103). Daley discerned such possible connections, without commenting on actual dependency, in the interplay of Christology and soteriology; in the notion of the connection between Jesus' freedom from original sin and his birth from a virgin; in the understanding of the Fall of the first humans as a choice of evil instead of good; in the perception of the Incarnation as redemption from the instability caused by sin; in ecclesiology; in the approach to the function of civil government; and in the view regarding the role of the bishop of Rome. Daley's main focus, however, was upon Maximus' anti-monothelite project and his engagement with the issue of will—a topic which so intrigued both Fathers. Daley entertained the possibility that Maximus could have found support in Augustine's pre-Chalcedonian Christology for his defence of a 'neo-Chalcedonian' vision of Christ's natural wills. It is primarily the link between the two authors on this topic that this chapter aims to explore further. It will be shown that, even though it is unlikely that Augustine's works directly informed Maximus' theology on the will, Maximus and his monks were aware of certain passages from Augustine and interpreted these in light of their own teaching.

Augustine and Maximus on the Will

Both Augustine and Maximus were theologians of the will, whose teachings markedly impacted on their respective traditions. Even so, it can no longer be maintained that Augustine was the inventor of the concept of the will for the West, as proposed in an influential study by Dihle (1982: 144; cf. Arendt 1978: 85–110; Sorabji 2000: 335–7). Frede (2011) and Byers (2013) have convincingly shown that Augustine built on a Stoic notion of the will. However, Augustine still appears to be the first to reflect more thoroughly on an evil will as the origin of sin (cf. Gilbert 1963; Lagouanère 2012: 215–51). In the Greek (p. 214) world, Maximus was the first to give a serious place to the term θέλησις in the context of reflection on human volition (Gauthier 1954; Madden 1982).

The contexts of Maximus' and Augustine's contributions on the will were different. Augustine first reflected on the will in a polemical theodicy against Manicheism, but it was foremost in the Pelagian controversy that he developed his mature thought on human volition, faced, as he was, with soteriological and theo-anthropological questions. Maximus, on the other hand, was mainly concerned with the notion of the will within the confines of the monothelite controversy. His central concerns were christological, focussing on the ontological status of the will and its function. In, and coloured by, these different contexts, both authors made their contributions on human volition based on different aspects of the earlier Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic traditions, and connected these reflections to the verb θέλω/*volo* 'I wish, want', which is used in biblical texts.[2] Augustine mainly used the term 'will' (*voluntas*), which should best be understood with reference to the Stoic term ὁρμή—a very wide concept that encompassed all different kinds of desires, dispositions, and impulses (Inwood 1985: e.g. 224–42; Byers 2006). Augustine, following the Stoics, understood this as an impulse which could be both reactive and dispositional, and was, in its most basic form, a 'primary impulse towards self-preservation' and life (Byers 2013: 218). In the Aristotelian tradition, the wide range of the Stoic ὁρμή is represented instead by the term 'appetency' (ὄρεξις), which was the word on which Maximus built his definition of 'will'. He wrote: 'the natural will (θέλημά … φυσικὸν) or the will (θέλησιν) is an appetitive capacity according to nature (δύναμιν τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ὀέντος ὀρεκτικήν) … [or] a rational and vital appetency (ὀρεξιν λογικήν τε καὶ ζωτικήν)' (*Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 12C–13A; cf. *Opusc.* 14, PG 91. 153A–B). This notion of the will, and Maximus' understanding of the wider volitional process, was developed in close proximity to earlier Stoic adjustments to the Aristotelian legacy and to the Aristotelian commentator tradition—both primarily inherited by Maximus through Nemesius (Gauthier 1954). For Augustine as well, the will is a power or capacity (*potentia*) of the soul (e.g. *Lib.arb*. 2. 19. 15, 3. 3. 8, 3. 16. 45). However, this should not be understood in a compartmentalized fashion—as an independent, localized faculty—but rather as an holistic ability of the human being, tied in to other functions of the soul. Such a reading of Augustine is a clear step away from a voluntaristic

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interpretation of his notion of the will, but there are still Augustinian passages which seem to permit the possibility of the will exercizing its own life, independent of the intellect. In Maximus' view, the will is also always closely related to the intellect, which is the human subject (Thunberg 1995: 209). Even so, he does 'not share the strong intellectualist understanding of the soul which characterizes Stoicism, and this allows space for the will to exist as an independent faculty' (Bathrellos 2004: 122).

Further, both Augustine and Maximus affirmed, in different ways, the belief that volition is connected to self-determination (*Civ.Dei*. 5. 9 and *Lib.arb*.; *DP*, PG 91. 324). (p. 215) This does not make the will a power with absolute autonomy, either over nature or against God (McFarland 2005: 410). Instead, the will belongs to nature, and is fundamentally set in a certain direction—we strive for certain goals in our basic makeup. In Augustine's vision, we wish to exist and to be happy (*Civ.Dei* 11. 26); in Maximus', we desire 'being, life, and motion' through the will (*Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 12C). In the end, these naturally set desires are only satisfied when a will, aided by grace, desires the good and can follow God's will. Thus, both Augustine and Maximus gave this prominence to human volition as a decisive factor in human motion towards our proper end and the goal of history, and stressed this in their cosmological treatments. Augustine did so in *Civ.Dei*, where he delineated the origin, course, and goal of the two cities; Maximus, in *Amb.Io.* 7, where the triad 'becoming–motion–rest' is the corresponding pattern of the history of creation.

Nevertheless, there are interruptions in the volitional motion towards the good end. For both Augustine and Maximus, the will was intrinsic to the human ability to deviate from God and the good. Both connected evil willing to the evil use (χρῆσις/*usus*) of a good nature. Augustine established that, through the will, we can use 'nature against nature', as 'evil wills make ill use of good natures (*malarum voluntatum … male illae utuntur naturis bonis*)' (*Civ.Dei* 11. 17, Dombart–Kalb 1955: 336–7). In his later writings, Maximus distinguished between the natural will, which belongs to our οὐσία, and our individual, hypostatic use of this capacity, which he called intention (γνώμη) and which renders possible our evil willing (*DP*, PG 91. 308; *Opusc*. 3, PG 91. 48A, 56B). For Augustine and Maximus, these negative aspects of willing—originating in Adam's choice of evil over good qua evil[3]—are intrinsically connected to the orientation away from God towards lesser beings (*Civ.Dei* 12. 8; *Q.Thal.*, Prol.).

In the area of evil willing, the difference between the theological 'systems' of Augustine and Maximus is clearly visible. Augustine stressed the will's incapability for the good, expressed in Aristotelian terms as subject to constant weakness (ἀκρασία) (Rist 1994: 184–5). According to Augustine, the Fall has changed the condition of human existence so that it is now wracked by desire (*concupiscentia*), which impedes the will so that it does not function properly and stands no chance of doing so. Humans can only resist concupiscence and start to desire rightly if aided by grace, which is given only on the basis of divine predestination. For Maximus, on the other hand, the will—though affected by disordered desire and, like the whole human being, in need of divine grace—is still capable of choosing the good, to the degree that our salvation finally depends on ourselves (cf. *LA* 42).

Augustine's recognition of human volition as belonging to our nature led him to recognize that Christ in his human nature also had a human will (Daley 2008; Kantzer Komline 2012; Berthold 2013). Apart from his engagement with Arian and Apollinarian teaching, which denied Christ's human soul, Augustine was not faced with movements which systematically negated aspects of Christ's human nature. He did not have to (p. 216) elaborate on the relationship between divine and human wills in Christ in the same incisive way as Maximus. Even so, Berthold has suggested that assimilation of the dyotheletic tendencies in Augustine's thought in the Latin world might have had something to do with the later western support for Maximus' dyothelitism (Berthold 2013; cf. Daley 2008).

Maximus was faced with christological questions regarding volition in a much more direct way, in the context of the monothelite and monoenergist controversies. The official imperial church sought to appease the non-Chalcedonian, miaphysite churches of the Orient in emphasizing the oneness of Christ's will, while remaining faithful to the Chalcedonian formula of 'one person and two natures'. Maximus, faithful to the Chalcedonian insistence on two intact and complete natures in Christ, maintained that 'will' is a category of nature and that Christ, therefore, must have two natural wills, each corresponding to one of his natures. By using trinitarian categories, Maximus developed his dyothelite vision and teaching on the will. This included the aforementioned distinction between 'natural will' as a capacity of volition belonging to the category of οὐσία, and γνώμη, which is a hypostatic category—the mode in which a particular human being wills. According to Maximus, Christ, in assuming a human nature, also assumed a natural will but lacked a gnomic will because the Logos had not united himself with

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a particular man, but with our generic nature. As indicated above, the gnomic will is not only an individual mode (τρόπος), but also a dysfunctional mode of willing due to the Fall and the ensuing changed condition of human existence under corruption. In Christ, who is one hypostasis, there is a new mode of human existence, as it is the Logos who exists in our nature. Corresponding to the hypostatic mode of Christ's human nature, his will is completely deified (cf. e.g. *DP*, PG 91. 293, 300; *Opusc*. 3, PG 91. 48). In lacking the gnomic will, Christ also lacks stages in the volitional process akin to us, such as hesitation and choice, and therefore runs no risk of straying from his natural movement. In him the will exists only as a basic 'rational desire' for everything natural, activated in a deified mode.

It is my understanding that Maximus developed his notion of the will independently from Augustine's legacy. His volitional language and definitions of the will lie closer to terminology and concepts from Aristotle, the Stoics, Nemesius, and the Byzantine christological tradition, than to the Augustinian tradition. These dependencies have been amply examined elsewhere (e.g. Gauthier 1954; Thunberg 1995; and Bathrellos 2004). Even though the Augustinian notion of the will did not inform Maximus' reflection, there was a historical point of contact between the two authors, as Maximus encountered Augustinian material on the will in the course of the monothelite conflict. In the remaining parts of this chapter, I will establish Maximus' awareness of Augustine, and his reliance on him as a theological authority—a prolegomenon, as it were—before moving on to show some of the ways in which Maximus seems to have come in closer contact with Augustine's writings. First, however, I will briefly highlight the temporal confines of Maximus' stay in the Latin West and the spread of Augustine's teaching in this region.

(p. 217) Maximus' Awareness of Augustine and Augustinian Texts

The chronology of Maximus' sojourn in the West is not entirely certain (cf. Allen 2015, and Jankowiak–Booth 2015). We know that he was present in Carthage at least by the Pentecost of 632 (Devreesse 1937: 25–35), which has led many to believe he left Constantinople in the wake of the Persian siege of 626 (Sherwood 1952: 5–6). This gives time for visits to Crete and, plausibly, Cyprus and Rome along the way (Khoperia 2003: 409–10). He then left for Rome in 645–46, and was transported, as a prisoner, from there to Constantinople in 653. It has also been suggested that he made trips back to the East during his African stay, in 635–40 (Dalmais 1982: 29–30), 633–41 (Brock 1973: 324–5), or 632 or soon thereafter–*c*.641 (Booth 2014: 140–70, 184–5, 253–4). In total, this accounts for between *c*.fifteen and twenty-five years in the West.

The North Africa Maximus traversed was an environment in which Greek culture was gaining ground on the Latin. The Latin language, however, still dominated the local ecclesiastical environment (cf. Cameron 1982: 49–62). Rome at the time was also a mixed world, with a significant Greek population appended to a Latin base (Ekonomou 2007). It was not until the Carolingian era that Augustine became the dominant western Father, but the dissemination of his works had already begun during his lifetime, and for two centuries copies had been produced in places like Italy, Gaul, and Spain (Leyser 2012; Weidmann 2012). Rome, especially, seems to have been a centre for the production of Augustinian manuscripts. Prosper of Aquitaine's works from his Roman period reveal a knowledge of an extended number of Augustinian works, in comparison to his previous works composed in Gaul. Other authors with connections to Rome, such as, for example, Eugippius in the sixth century, also had access to numerous works by the bishop of Hippo (Bouhot 1998). In North Africa, Augustine was the great authority, despite the fact that the library of Hippo had not become the centre for copyists that Possidius had hoped (*Vita Augustini* 18)—indeed, Bouhot has even suggested that the whole library had been moved to Rome during the Vandal occupation. Even so, Augustine's authority endured. Victor of Vita (*Historia persecutionis Africanae prouinicae* 1. 10–11, 3. 61, Moorhead 1992: 6–7, 89), Fulgentius of Ruspe (Frend 1984: 798–800), and Fulgentius Ferrandus (Price 2009: 120), all held Augustine in high regard. Closer to Maximus' day, Gregory the Great encouraged Innocent, prefect of Africa, to read the works of Augustine (*Registrum* 10. 16, Norberg 1982: 845), while praising his work over and above anything produced in Italy—a testimony that might illustrate both the extent of Augustine's fame and the dissemination of his works at the time. Thus, Garrigues was probably right when he stated that the church in which Maximus arrived considered itself to be 'the church of St Augustine' (1976: 59).

Maximus' first indirect reference to Augustine can be found in his mention of the approved, or accepted, teachers (οἱ ἔγκριτοι διδάσκαλοι). This phrase is a reference to twelve authoritative Fathers 'canonized' by the Fifth Ecumenical Council—Athanasius, (p. 218) Hilary, Basil, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine, Theophilus, John of Constantinople, Cyril, Leo, and Proclus—who were said to be accepted by that

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council, along with 'everything they expounded on the orthodox faith and in condemnation of heretics' (Straub, *ACO* IV.i. 37. 22–8, cf. 13. 5–12). Reference to this group of teachers, also with the similar term οἱ ἔγκριτοι πατέρες, was common in the period after the council. It appeared in the *acta* of the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and in works by authors such as Anastasius of Sinai, Germanus I, and John of Damascus. Maximus first used the expression in anti-monophysite polemics in 633–34 and 641,[4] without quoting the adjunct list of authorities. In 642, then in an anti-monothelite context, Maximus cited the list of Fathers in an abbreviated form, claiming that the teaching on Christ's 'natural wills' was 'the teaching of the famous Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, John Chrysostom, Theophilus, Cyril, and *the other approved* Fathers' (*Opusc.* 19, PG 91. 224D, emphasis mine). Similarly, in the debate with Pyrrhus, Maximus was faced with the assertion that speaking of two wills in Christ should be avoided and that christological language should be restricted to the definitions of the ecumenical councils. Maximus then, based on the authority of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, referred back to the dyothelite language of the approved Fathers: 'The Fifth Council … decreed with the very words: "all the works of the blessed Athanasius, Basil, the two Gregories, and *other approved teachers* specified beside these should be received", in which the two wills are both clearly present and handed down' (*DP,* PG 91. 300D–301A, emphasis mine). Maximus thus indirectly demonstrated knowledge of Augustine—at least by name and as a theological authority—as early as 633–64, and definitely by 642. The reference to this group of teachers as a means to rebut the new heresy was the characteristic strategy applied by Maximus and his retinue in the process leading up to the Lateran Council of 649. It is through this process that we can trace Maximus' contact with Augustinian texts (cf. McFarland 2015).

Maximus, Augustine, and the *Acts of the Lateran Synod* of 649

Soon after the debate with Pyrrhus, with the strategy of referring to the Fathers in mind, Maximus produced his most extensive florilegium in a *Spiritual and dogmatic tome* (*Opusc*. 15), written in Rome *c.*646–47. The purpose was to refute the *Ekthesis*, which had referred to the approved Fathers in order to question the validity of confessing two wills and energies in Christ. Augustine was not yet cited—out of the twenty-seven citations, only two were from Latin authors (Ambrose and Leo). In the following years, Maximus (p. 219) and his monks collaborated with Pope Theodore in preparation for the Lateran Synod, and Maximus' florilegium was extended into the florilegium which would be presented in the fifth session of the council (Pierres 1940: 27*–56*, cf. Devreesse 1928: 46–7). Notably, Augustinian material was included in this version from the following works: *Ep.* 140, *In Joh., Enarr.in Ps., Civ.Dei, C.serm.Ar.*, and *C.Jul.imp.*

As in the works of Maximus, the list with the twelve Fathers was used in the Lateran *acta* as a rationale for distinguishing patristic authorities while delivering testimonies. The *acta* referred to the approved Fathers on several occasions, and before the presentation of the florilegia in the fifth session, the authority of these Fathers was repeated four times and the original passage from the Fifth Ecumenical Council was quoted.

We know for certain that Maximus knew of the Augustinian quotations in the *acta* from the account of his debate with Bishop Theodosius of Caesarea Bithynia, in 656, which occurred while Maximus was exiled in Bizya. During the debate, when Theodosius claimed that the Fathers did not speak of two wills and energies of Christ numerically, Maximus presented a copy of the Lateran *acta*, showing him that the Fathers spoke of 'the two wills and activities in our Saviour and God Jesus Christ' (*DB* 4, Allen–Neil 2002: 97, 99; 1999: 111, 113). All the quotations from the *acta* were then read out, and after the reading Theodosius accepted Maximus' position. In response to this, Maximus replied: 'God has stirred you to accept the expressions of the holy Fathers, as the canon demands'.[5] This account gives the impression that Maximus was well versed in the *acta*, as he was able to use them proficiently to demonstrate his position from the patristic citations. As only a few of these citations explicitly speak of two wills or energies in Christ (texts from Athanasius and Severian of Gabala: Riedinger, ACO i. 282. 23–30, 292. 1–9), some interpretation and exposition must have been in place. This event, therefore, clearly reveals that Maximus was well versed in the *acta*'s patristic material, including the Augustinian citations, and used it as a theologically authoritative text in the debate. However, the story runs deeper than his employment of the *acta*. Maximus played an important part in the preparation of the council itself.

Maximus' theological impact on the Lateran Synod is well documented, not only by such historical sources as Theophanes' *Chronographia* entry for 628/9 CE,[6] the Greek *Life of Martin* (Peeters 1933: 254), and the Syriac *Life of Maximus* (Brock 1973: 318), but also by modern research. Erich Caspar pointed out that Maximus clearly acted as a 'mediator' in the Greek–Latin translation process, and in the preparation of the patristic and dogmatic material

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(1933: 558–9, cf. 1932: 18–20), while Jean Pierres argued for Maximus' influence on the basis of the great similarities between the acts and his anti-monothelite writings (Pierres 1940). While preparing the ACO edition of the *acta*, which is extant (p. 220) in a bilingual Greek–Latin adjacent version, Rudolf Riedinger discovered that these writings were predominantly translated from Greek to Latin and not the other way around, as had previously been believed.[7] The Latin of the *acta* contains anomalies that point to this process and further give away the identity of the translator, as the proficiency resembles that of a second-language speaker (1985: 520–2; 1992: 153–4). Riedinger concluded, with great certainty, that Maximus and his companions were the creators of these documents (1981: 181; 1982: 121). He understood them to be 'a purely literary product', written *before* the council. In doing so, he cast doubt on the historical account of the council itself (1976: 37), though he later allowed for the *acta* to have been read out to the western prelates before they signed them (1977: 256; 1982: 120). The idea of a nearly fictional convocation has been criticized, since, for example, the subsequent accusations against Martin I did not include charges of having fabricated a council (Alexakis 1996: 18–21; cf. Riedinger 1977: 46). Moreover, a real gathering would have been necessary in order to enact the condemnation of the heretics (Cubitt 2009: 136), and indeed, Maximus himself claimed to have anathematized the *Typos* 'during the Synod in Rome in the Church of the Saviour and in that of the Mother of God' (*RM* 11, Allen–Neil 2002: 71; 1999: 45). With such considerations, the trend after Riedinger has been to see the convention as a well prepared, 'stage-managed', or 'scripted' performance, essentially empowered by the work already done by the eastern monks.[8] The current scholarly consensus is that the *acta* are largely the result of the literary activity of Maximus and his group of monks (Cubitt 2009: 136; Ekonomou 2007: 134; Hovorun 2008: 84). Whether specific sections were drafted by Maximus himself, or by any of his monks, has not been specifically investigated. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that the *acta in toto* were drafted in close proximity to Maximus, and were overshadowed by his theological stature. With this as a background, a closer look at the use of Augustinian material in the *acta* will reveal Maximus and his monks' interaction with aspects of Augustine's thought.

The Greek monks are believed to have gathered the patristic texts for the florilegia. Some scholars have pointed to the possibility that the Latin citations were gathered by Latin speakers (Pierres 1940: 53*; Sansterre 1983: 119). Even if this was the case, the extracts were interpreted through the theological lens of the Greek monks when translated into Greek. According to Riedinger, these monks were skilled in Latin (1985: 519–22).[9] Through their work on the Latin extracts of the Lateran *acta*, these translators made interesting interpretations, adaptations, and changes. These could be understood as comments, made by the school of Maximus on the Augustinian (p. 221) material. Of the four main florilegia, the most relevant here is the third, 'On the natural wills of Christ our God' (Riedinger, ACO i. 274–96). It contains forty-four texts, the first twelve of which, after a quotation from Ps-Hippolytus, are by Latin Fathers: Ambrose, Augustine, and Leo. Here, five of the nine Augustinian quotations in the *acta* can be found.

Adaptation of Augustinian Texts to Maximus' Theology and Vocabulary

The most immediately salient feature is the adaptation to the theology and vocabulary of Maximus the Confessor in the Augustinian quotations.[10] For example, in an excerpt from *Enarr.in Ps.* 93. 19 (Riedinger, ACO i. 276. 29–278. 10; Dekkers–Fraipont 1956: 1321), Augustine reflected on the reality of Christ's agony in the garden. He affirmed that Christ assumed a real sadness (*tristitia*) together with the flesh. The Latin version does not mention a 'will', but in the Greek version a sentence has been added at the end of the quotation: 'Therefore he assumed a true will of the flesh (θέλημα σαρκὸς), since he assumed true flesh.' It appears that the translator took Augustine's recognition of the Incarnation—and of the human psychology of Christ in relation to the Gethsemane scene—as an indication of his recognition of Christ's human will, or at least assumed that the Augustinian text could be interpreted in this way.

The citation of a text from *Civ.Dei* 14. 5–6 (Dombart–Kalb 1955: 420. 41–421. 15)[11] is a further example of the reinterpretation of contextually mismatched patristic material in a dyothelitic fashion (Riedinger, ACO i. 278. 12–29). Originally, this passage spoke to a post-lapsarian anthropological situation about the way in which the quality of a human will (*voluntas*) determines the blameworthiness, or blamelessness, of human passions or emotions. In the *acta*, however, this text was inserted into the florilegium concerned with Christ's natural will. This is certainly evidence that the Greek monks understood Augustine's broad vision of the all-compassing and corruptible *voluntas* as the very natural will which Christ had assumed according to Maximus' theology, and which they set out to defend. A more direct reference to Maximus' vocabulary appears in the translation of a phrase originally reading 'we desire in hope of what we want'. Here, the active Latin construction *ea quae volumus* was translated

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into the passive τοῦ θεληθέντος—a term that Maximus specifically used for denoting the object that is wished for (cf. *DP*, PG 91. 292C–D; *Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 25A–D).

(p. 222) The most startling example of a text being adapted to Maximus' theology, however, is Augustine's *Ep*. 140 *ad Honoratum* (Riedinger, ACO i. 280. 25–36, 90. 8–26).[12] The original Latin version (Goldbacher 1904: 163) affirms the possibility of 'becoming sons of God' by participating in the Word, since the Son became human by participation. According to Augustine, human beings are changeable and need to change for the better, while the Word is unchangeable and did not change for the worse when he was made a partaker in the flesh 'through the means of a rational soul'. The passage ends with a section stating that the Apollinarians were wrong in assuming that Christ was without either a soul or reason. It should be noted that the original text contains no reference to a will of any sort. In the Greek altered version, however, we ordinary human beings are said to be changeable according to intention (τρεπτοὶ κατὰ γνώμην), while the incarnate Christ is not only confessed to have a soul and reason, but also a 'will' (θέλησιν; this addition is also made in the Latin version with *voluntatem*). Thus, Augustine's christological and anthropological text is interpreted through the lens of Maximus' theology, and, with some minor changes, turned to represent the core of his thought on volition and its terminology: while the incarnational reality of Christ's humanity includes a will, intention (γνώμη) is the factor by which we can change, either for the worse or for the better. Further, Augustine's gloss indicating that the soul had a mediating role between the Logos and the flesh, is changed into the simple statement: 'The Logos … became flesh, that is human, but not without a soul.' In this way, Augustine's Christology was read through a standard christological framework, with the translators accommodating its Origenistic element by reinterpreting it (cf. Grillmeier 1975: 407–13; Keech 2012: 56, 154).

The use of texts simply affirming aspects of Christ's humanity or volitional life as a confirmation of dyothelitism is typical of the *acta*, and characteristic of Maximus' argumentation in general. This hermeneutic was certainly connected to a belief in a shared orthodoxy among the Fathers. The recognition of Christ's human nature by the Fathers was taken to warrant the implied natural operations which manifest this nature—'will' included. The lax relationship of the Greek translation to the original texts did not stop at the alteration of language and concepts central to the issues at stake, but extended into what would be considered forgery in our times. Famous are the non-authentic patristic definitions of 'will' present in Maximus' writings, pointed out by Madden (1982). In addition, Alexander Alexakis (2000) has pointed out alterations or fabrications of texts related to the procession of the Spirit which he argues go back to Rome and the circles around Pope Theodore and Maximus in the midst of the monothelite conflict. The tampered passages express either the Spirit's relation to the Son or the monarchy of the Father and represent a similar free (p. 223) use of patristic texts for specific purposes that is also present in the translation of Augustinian texts.

The translation of *Ep*. 140 *ad Honoratum* contains further such alterations which provide convincing evidence of the translator's close familiarity with an earlier work of Maximus. An exegetical dictum from *Q.Thal* 47 has been written into the Greek version in the above-mentioned anti-Apollinarian section. In the original version, Augustine states that scripture, 'in its own way (*more suo*)', used 'flesh' for 'human' in order to emphasize Christ's humility, and in order that we should not think that 'flesh' is something unworthy. 'Nor', Augustine adds, 'is it the case that, because it is written, "All flesh will see the salvation of God" [Isa. 40: 5], we are not to understand "souls" there.'

The translator follows the Latin train of thought closely, but changes Augustine's simple reference to scripture's 'own way' into the assertion that 'it is customary in the Scripture to name the whole from the part (σύνηθες γὰρ τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τὸ ὅλον ἐκ τοῦ μέρους κατονομάζειν) and sometimes the greater through the inferior (τὸ κρεῖττον ἔσθ' ὅτε διὰ τοῦ ἥττονος)'. As the Latin *neque* is then replaced with the Greek καὶ τοῦτο δῆλον ('this is also clear'), the first section is fused together with the one following, so that the quotation which follows from Isaiah 40: 5 becomes an example of the scriptural principles introduced earlier into the text. This part now reads: 'This is also clear from the saying "And all flesh will see the salvation of God." For it is obvious that the scriptural word (ὁ γραφικὸς λόγος) is not presenting to us here "flesh" deprived of souls.'

This recasting seems to be dependent on Maximus' *Q.Thal.* 47 (from *c.*634 CE), which has an exact parallel to the first of the exegetical *dicta*. Maximus, asked to comment on Isaiah 40: 5 ('All flesh will see the salvation of God'), stated that 'the scriptural word customarily signifies the whole human from the part of the flesh' (Laga and Steel 1980: 323). Here the first, synecdochic, exegetical principle is applied to address the same question of whether 'flesh' implies the whole human being; the same scriptural reference (Isa. 40: 5) is cited; and the same term, 'the scriptural word', which is an uncommon way to refer to scripture, is used. In addition, the second exegetical

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principle, that the greater can be named through the inferior, is present in scholium 15 to *Q.Thal.* 58, also there related precisely to the question of whether 'flesh' implies a soul (Laga and Steel 1990: 41). Even if this scholium postdates the Lateran *acta*, the marked similarities in *Q.Thal.* 47 raise the question: how did they get into the text? Only someone deeply steeped in Maximus' writings could make these connections. The parallels compellingly suggest that it was the Homologetes, or someone intimately familiar with his thought, who made this Augustinian text more congruent with dyotheletic purposes, while regurgitating older exegetical material associated with the topic.

A passage from *Enarrationes in Psalmos* also deserves commentary regarding its similarities to Maximus' view of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane. The interpretation of this scriptural passage was central to the monothelite conflict. The patristic tradition before Maximus had emphasized the triumph of Christ's divine will over human weakness in the Gethsemane prayer, which was enacted either by strengthening the human will or by overcoming it. Christ's hesitation in the face of death had been taken to be a natural human reaction, often understood as occurring in solidarity with us, (p. 224) in a representative manner, rather than being his own (cf. Bathrellos 2004: 139–45; Kantzer Komline 2012: 52–3). Maximus' contribution to the interpretation of this text was his realization that not only the initial request for reprieve, but also the final relinquishment to the divine will, was an expression of Christ's human will. Significantly, Augustine's *Enar.in Ps.* 100. 6 (Dekkers–Fraipont 1956: 1411) is one of the few patristic quotations in the *acta* (Riedinger, ACO i. 280. 15–24) that openly support this understanding of a double movement of Christ's human willing in the garden. In this text, Augustine affirmed that Christ's request to let the cup pass was 'an expression of the human will', but attributed the prayer for the fulfilment of God's will to 'a right heart'. For Augustine, this distinction was connected with his association of the human will with the ability of wanting something different than God, and, in the context of the quotation, with his understanding of 'a right heart' as a heart that 'does not "not want" anything which God wants' (*Enarr.in Ps*. 100. 6, Dekkers–Fraipont 1956: 1410–11). In this vein, a right heart subordinates itself to the will of God even though things are happening against one's own human will. It is this kind of submission that Christ prefigured in the garden. To the extent that the second prayer thus represents Christ going *against* his human will, the similarities with Maximus' exegesis lessen, but the text still represents an affirmation of Christ's human agency also in the prayer of submission. In his commentary on Psalm 93, a text from which another extract is present in the florilegium, Augustine stated just before the extracted passage that 'the right in heart' are 'those who want what God wants' (*Enarr.in Ps*. 93. 18). This turns the interpretation into a positive volitional agreement with God—a notion which lies close to Maximus' thought. Later Augustinian texts, such as *Contra sermonem Arianorum* and *Contra Maximinum*, support Maximus' contribution more specifically since Augustine, in these texts, fully acknowledged Christ's volition also in the second prayer (cf. Kantzer Komline 2012). The absence of these sources from the florilegium might indicate that the content of these later Augustinian texts was not probed before the Lateran Synod. In any case, it is unlikely that Maximus and his monks knew of this development in Augustine's thought. Additionally, they did not present this florilegium to support Maximus' specific understanding of Christ's 'double' human willing—at least such a point was never made—but to substantiate the more fundamental notion of Christ's human volition. They unabashedly used this and other texts pointing in this general direction to support their overall vision.

An Augustinian Passage Used in a Theological Argument

After the reading of the florilegia in the fifth session, the council ended with three speeches that summarized its theological message. The first of these speeches (Riedinger, ACO i. 344–52) employed two Augustinian quotations to reinforce its argument. These are the only Augustinian texts in the *acta* which are outside the florilegia and appear as part of a direct theological argument. In the *acta*, this first speech is attributed to Bishop (p. 225) Maximus of Aquileia, but it nevertheless carries a number of similarities to Maximus the Confessor's thought and writings.[13]

At one point in the speech, the author addressed the monothelites' refusal to acknowledge that the two wills of Christ are natural, a refusal they based on their idea that everything natural is 'placed under necessity'. The author of the speech then adduced two quotations from Cyril of Alexandria to counter the monothelite claims. In the context of the first extract, Cyril was faced with the challenge that the natural union in Christ implied involuntariness on behalf of the Logos in the Incarnation, since everything natural is 'subject to the laws of necessity'. Cyril countered this challenge by stating that we are rational by nature neither involuntarily, nor by compulsion—nor is God good and wise under such constraint—and that to have such an opinion is 'proof of open folly'. In the second Cyrillian extract, it is stated that God 'is not involuntarily what he is naturally', but instead 'has by nature the

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agreeing will to be what he is'. Then follows:

> The holy Augustine too accords (συμφθέγγεται) with this in the fifth book of his treatise against Julian the Pelagian, saying as follows: 'Surely, Julian, when a human or an angel at some point wills something, is it not their nature that wills it? Are not angels and human beings natures? Who would say that they are not? If then, an angel and a human are natures, it is obvious that the nature wills just what the angel wills and that the nature wills just what the human being wills.' And again elsewhere in that book: 'Surely, Julian, the will of a human being goes forth from the human being? Of what sort and in what manner does it go forth from human beings, if not from their nature, because the human being is a nature.' Mark how clearly the God-breathed teaching of the Holy Fathers (ἡ τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων θεόπνευστος διδασκαλία) has demonstrated for us that the will is natural in those assigned by God to have a will in their substance and, for this reason, the acts of will are natural and free of all necessity; and that to choose to think otherwise in regard to this is stupid and ignorant.[14]

The two Augustinian quotations are taken from the fifth book of *C.Jul.imp*. The Greek translations are fairly free in relation to the Latin original. Augustine's and Cyril's teaching is referred to as 'God-breathed' (θεόπνευστος), which is a Pauline descriptor of holy scripture (2 Tim. 3: 16). This indicates the degree of authority ascribed to these teachers by the author. One of the Cyrillian passages is used in a similar refutation in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* (*c*.646. PG 91. 293B–296A), without the attached Augustinian texts which must subsequently have been added to the discourse.[15]

There are a few details regarding the presentation of the quotations which are ambiguous. In including the Augustinian quotations, the author departed from the (p. 226) theme of defending nature against compulsion. The Augustinian texts instead focus on the assertion that 'will' is natural. Nevertheless, these extracts are prefaced by a sentence stating that they 'say the same thing as (συμφθέγγεται)' the quotations from Cyril, which they clearly do not. In addition, the ensuing summary presents the content of Augustine's and Cyril's quotations as a unity, and encourages us to see 'how clearly' their teaching has demonstrated that wills are natural, that volitional acts are free from compulsion, and that to think otherwise is foolish. However, only the first of these points is actually present in the Augustinian quotations. One option is that the summary is a recapitulation of the content of all four quotations, taken as a whole. What we have here, then, is an example of the common tendency to read the Fathers as being completely in accord. This tendency appears often in Maximus' writings and is also typical of the Lateran *acta*: diverse authors are understood to agree simply because they are orthodox. Croce has emphasized that Maximus held that the same Spirit had inspired the scriptures and the Fathers, and therefore believed that the principle of non-contradiction applied to them (Croce 1974: 99; cf. *Ep*. 15, PG 91. 549A). Based on this principle, Maximus elsewhere set out to prove that it was impossible for Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus to be in disagreement (*Amb.Th*. 13, PG 91. 1208) and that, moreover, divergent passages from the Theologian could be explained as being in perfect accord (e.g. *Amb.Th*. 1, PG 91. 1033–1036; cf. Louth 1996: 22). The consensus of the Fathers was even applicable to dogmatic disputes anterior to their appearances (Pelikan 1973: 285), an example of which might be Maximus' attempt to prove dyothelitism from the first sentence of the Nicene Creed (*RM* 4, Allen–Neil 2002: 55, 57; 1999: 23, 25). In the Lateran speech, Augustine is added to this clustered understanding of the Fathers, which is indicated also in the application of the word 'God-breathed' (θεόπνευστος) to his and Cyril's teaching, and the reference to this teaching in the singular (ἡ διδασκαλία).

But there might be more going on here. In the context of the extracted passages in the fifth book of *C.Jul.imp.*, all the stated similarities between Augustine's and Cyril's teaching are present. The question is whether this context was known to the author. In the Latin version of the speech, the Augustinian quotations do not correspond to the Latin originals but are translations from the Greek version of the speech. This could indicate that the creators of the *acta* had no means of tracking down the original Latin text of *C.Jul.imp.*, and that they therefore did not know the context of these citations, but obtained them from other sources.[16] However, *C.Jul.imp*. had been available in Rome in the mid-fifth century, at least in selections, since Prosper of Aquitaine then used excerpts from Books 1–4 in his *Book of Pronouncements of St Augustine* (Callens–Gastaldo 1972: 323, 330–3). This text belongs to his Roman period, during which he had access to the papal library (Markus 1986: 34; Hwang 2009: 195–8; Bouhot 1998: 29). In 680, Pope Agatho would later cite six passages from Book 5 (Riedinger 1990: 76. 27–78. 20), which did not differ from the standard reading. It is very likely, therefore, that the (p. 227) text was available in Rome at the time of the synod. The divergence from the original Latin could instead depend on the location of these quotations outside the florilegia of the *acta*, and the possibility that they, therefore, had been translated into Latin

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with the rest of the speech. In this way, the context of the passages could have been known to the author without having being considered at the time of translation.

A close comparison between *C.Jul.imp*. Book 5 and the speech certainly reveals resemblances in theological themes, which could explain why this work received attention in this argument.

In *C.Jul.imp.*, Augustine had defended the natural will's freedom from necessity and its original goodness according to nature. At issue had been the question of whether humans are pressed by necessity to sin or not to sin. Julian had maintained that everything natural is necessitated and, therefore, that the human will cannot be natural if it ought to be free (*C.Jul.imp.* 5. 41). For Julian, human beings were created in the image of God precisely with respect to free choice, which he interpreted as the possibility that 'an evil will could arise, just as a good will could also arise' (*C.Jul.imp.* 5. 38, Rotelle–Teske 1999: 560)—a possibility he held to be a reality not only for the primordial human, but also for all human beings. Augustine, in response to Julian's argument, distinguished between a good will, with which humankind was originally invested and which was not compelled to sin, and an evil will, which arose from this good will as a result of a bad use of free choice (*C.Jul.imp.* 5. 35, 38). Augustine severely criticized Julian for not considering the original good nature of the will, and argued that if the image of God lies in having a free will that can will both to sin and not to sin, it would deny the fundamental notion that 'God cannot will both'. Instead, Augustine asserted that in God, 'who cannot sin in any way, there is the highest form of free choice' (*C.Jul.imp*. 5. 38, Rotelle–Teske 1999: 562). In this way, Augustine, just like Cyril, based his assertion of a free, yet natural, will on his notion of the being of God.[17] There is a slight difference of approach between these two, as Augustine maintained that God is good by necessity, whereas Cyril argued against such involuntariness. However, Augustine claimed that the necessity of God's virtue is based on the fact that God wants it, 'to the degree that he wills it in such a way that he cannot not will it' (*C.Jul.imp.* 5. 61, Rotelle–Teske 1999: 589). Thus, both agreed that God naturally wills to be what he is, that is, God is not that which God is due to compulsion—even if Augustine would claim that the fact that 'God cannot but be just' must be called necessity (*C.Jul.imp.* 5. 61, Rotelle–Teske 1999: 589).

Further, and more importantly, Augustine disagreed with Julian's main thrust against the categorization of will as 'natural': the idea that '[w]hatever … creatures have as part of their nature, they have obtained as something necessary' (*C.Jul.imp*. 5. 46, Rotelle–Teske 1999: 571). Against this maxim, Augustine brought examples from human nature obtained as possibilities, not necessities; for example, the possibility of having sexual intercourse, bearing children, and eating food. Based on these examples, Augustine (p. 228) maintained that Julian's definition was faulty, as these natural things belong to human life without being necessitated (5. 46). Further, Augustine maintained that the will plays a crucial role in the actualization of these natural possibilities. With regard to sexual acts and the devouring of food he stated: 'For either is natural: that these things can happen and that these things do happen; but the former is also when we do not will it, while the latter is only if we will it' (*C.Jul.imp.* 5. 49, Zelzer 2004: 255. 14–6). In this schema, he acknowledged that the human will is both deeply involved at the level of nature and still the factor that determines whether possibilities are brought into realities or not. With the exception of the typical Augustinian recognition that humans necessarily want to be happy (5. 55), he even juxtaposed 'will' and necessity as being mutually exclusive (5. 53). In no way did he allow for the will not to be natural (5. 53). Indeed, the first quotation used in the speech by Maximus of Aquileia is taken from a passage in which Augustine defended the assertion that even evil willing is natural (5. 53). This precise context is overlooked in the Lateran speech. The second Augustinian quotation comes from a passage where Augustine plainly argues that the will comes from nature (5. 55).

In further correspondence to the assertions summarized in the speech, Augustine stated that it is foolish and stupid to claim that everything which is natural is obtained and driven by necessity (5. 49). The three items from the summation of Cyril's and Augustine's teaching in the Lateran speech are thus present, also, in Book 5 of *C.Jul.imp*. In addition, the original context and purpose of the Augustinian assertions match the purpose for which the quotations were employed by the *acta*: in the defence of a natural will against necessity and compulsion. All these circumstances would be only a coincidence if these Augustinian passages were chosen without any reference to their context. However, this seems less likely. Instead, it seems to me that Maximus the Confessor and his monks—who probably were the ones to include these extracts in the speech and to assert the claim that they, together with Cyril's quotations, proved that the 'will' is natural and free from necessity—were aware of their origin.

The Lateran *acta* aside, Maximus never quoted Augustine. Since Maximus spent perhaps twenty-five years in a

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geographical area where Augustine's teaching was widespread, why did he did not make more use of his works (cf. Daley 2008: 123–4)? The answer to this question lies, perhaps, in his language abilities and the theological context. Maximus was Greek. Even after his sojourn in the West, he stated: 'I love the Romans because we share the same faith, whereas I love the Greeks because we share the same language' (*RM* 11, Allen–Neil 2002: 71; 1999: 47). Throughout his time in the West, his correspondents, context, and cortège were predominantly Greek. At first, he lived in Sophronius' Greek-speaking monastery (Sherwood 1952: 6) and seemed to have affiliated himself more with African Greek-speaking monastic groups (Cameron 1982: 57). If he learned Latin at all, it was perhaps later, when he developed contacts in the African and Roman churches in order to fight monothelitism. Then, the heresy targeted was a Greek theological construct represented by Greek emperors and Greek ecclesiastical authorities (Hovorun 2008: 53–102; 2015). The support for monothelitism in the West was insignificant, and all popes after 638 opposed the imperial agenda. Rather, it was the East that needed convincing. All texts and heretics—contemporary (p. 229) and historical—condemned by the Lateran Synod were Greek. Anastasius Apocrisiarius declared that the goal of the synod was to reveal the teaching of the Fathers and heretics to the eastern sphere (*Ep.Anast.* 10, Allen–Neil 2002: 143; 1999: 185). It is therefore not strange that this objective was carried out predominantly with sources relevant to a Greek-speaking audience. Possibly, then, a combination of language ability and ecclesiastical context could explain Maximus' initial seemingly small interaction with Latin theology; while later, his theological purposes and intended audience suffice as reasons to why Augustinian references are so few.

Conclusion: Maximus' Interaction with Augustine

Despite his long stay in the West and the well-established standing of Augustine in the regions he visited, Maximus the Confessor never mentioned Augustine by name, nor quoted him in his works. Though their notions of volition share many features, the similarities can be ascribed to their shared background in late-antique philosophical and Christian traditions. Nevertheless, in his engagement in the monothelite conflict, there is evidence that Maximus interacted with Augustinian texts. The material presented here suggests that, by 631 at least, Maximus was aware of Augustine's position as a council-approved Father, and that he increased his direct references to the list of approved Fathers during the monothelite conflict. In Rome, Augustinian quotations were adduced to Maximus' dyothelite florilegium and presented in the Lateran *acta,* with references to the same authoritative list. Later, Maximus relied directly on a copy of the *acta* and its patristic citations—Augustine included—for validation of his dogma in his debate with Bishop Theodosius of Caesarea Bithynia. In addition, Maximus' close association with the creation of the Lateran *acta* ties him to the effort of accommodating patristic proof-texts, including the ones from Augustine, in a coherent theological case for his teaching. Notably, Augustinian extracts in the florilegia were translated into Greek—either by Maximus or his associates—and adapted in the process to carry the imprint of Maximus' ideas and primary concerns. Finally, in one of the summarizing speeches of the council, two Augustinian citations were adduced to the argument, which presents a Maximian critique of monothelitism. The framing of the quotations suggests that the author knew of the original context of the extracts.

In the engagement with the question of whether Maximus knew of Augustine, and perhaps was influenced by his thought, the evidence relating to the topic of the will points to two divergent facts: on the one hand, that Maximus seems to have developed his theology of the will independently from Augustine's teaching; and, on the other, that Maximus knew of Augustine and that Augustinian extracts were used—and even tampered with—by him or his monks to fit dyothelite purposes. Based on this conclusion, it is perhaps more accurate—at least as far as the topic of the will is concerned—to (p. 230) speak of an 'influence' of Maximus and his monks on Augustinian texts, exerted retroactively through the processes of translation and adaptation, rather than the other way around.

Suggested Reading

The definitive text on the legacy of Augustine in the East, up to Photius, is Altaner 1952. See also Lössl 2000, Demacopoulos–Papanikolaou 2008, and Crostini 2013. On Augustine and the will, see Byers 2006 and 2013; on Maximus and the will, see Gauthier 1954 and Thunberg 1995: 208–30. On Maximus' knowledge of Augustine, see Berthold 1982 and Daley 2008; on his knowledge of Augustine's teaching on the will, specifically, and related topics, see Neil 2003, Wilken 1998, McFarland 2005, 2007, 2010, and 2015, and Börjesson 2013.

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Notes:

([1]) Some of the evidence here presented has previously been published in Börjesson 2013. On the Byzantine reception of Augustine in the time of Maximus, see Rackl 1924; Altaner 1967; Nichols 1987; Azkoul 1990; Fürst 1999; Rose 2007; Demacopoulos and Papanikolaou 2008: 11–40; and Crostini 2013.

([2]) Chappell 1995; Gauthier 1954; Byers 2013; Frede 2011; Sorabji 2000, 319–40.

([3]) *Civ.Dei* 14. 13–14; *Q.Thal.* 42, Laga–Steel 1980: 285–7; cf. Daley 2008: 121.

([4]) *Ep*. 13, PG 91. 525B, cf. 532C, and *Ep*. 12, PG 91. 496D.

([5]) It is not entirely clear to which canon Maximus was referring (cf. Allen–Neil 2002: 182 n.30). One possibility is that he was referring to canons 1 to 11 of the Lateran Synod's *Acts*. Specifically, canons 10 and 11 profess belief in the two wills and operations of Christ, respectively.

([6]) *Chron.* 331, Mango–Scott 1997: 462. Cf. *Vita Max. III,* ch. 17, Neil–Allen 2003: 68–9; and *Synodicon Vetus*, ch. 139, Duffy and Parker 1979: 116–17.

([7]) Riedinger presented his discoveries in series of articles, all of which were later collectively published in Riedinger 1998.

([8]) Herrin 1987: 253; Alexakis 1996: 18–21; Ekonomou 2007: 131; Hovorun 2008: 84; Cubitt 2009: 136.

([9]) This claim is supported by the fact that Anastasius had been working as *apocrisarius* and was said, just like Maximus, to know Latin (*DB* 4, Allen–Neil 2002: 99; 1999: 115). Maximus himself left proof of some proficiency in Latin when, in the mid-640s, he commented on the translation of a papal encyclical and conveyed that he understood the intricacies of translating Latin theological concepts into Greek regarding the procession of the Spirit (*Opusc*. 10, PG 91. 134–136; cf. Louth 1997: 340).

([10]) Crostini (2013: 728–9) makes some observations in regards to the dyothelite cause of the Lateran Council. I will focus particularily on similarities with Maximus' writings.

([11]) Book 14 of *Civ.Dei* is rich with intersections and overlaps between themes present in the writings of Augustine and Maximus. Here we find, for example, reflections on the first sin of the will (cf. *Civ.Dei* 14. 13; *Q.Thal.* 42, Laga–Steel 1980: 285, 287), a treatment of the good use of the passions (cf. *Civ.Dei* 14. 7–8; *Q.Thal.* 1), and an explanation of the creation of the human body (cf. *Civ.Dei* 14. 10–11; *Amb*. 8, PG 91. 1104B), each of which seems to mirror explanations and treatments also related by Maximus.

([12]) The extract first appears in session two, in a florilegium attached to a letter sent originally from the suffragan bishops of Proconsularis to Patriarch Paul of Constantinople in 646. The letter had been sent to Rome before 647, so the work on the text might have been done sometime before the Council of 649. See Riedinger 1980.

([13]) See Börjesson 2013: 331–2, where some similarities are listed.

([14]) Riedinger, ACO i. 348. 34–350. 8. The two Augustinian extracts can be found in *C.Jul.imp.* 5. 53 (Zelzer 2004: 258. 14–8) and 5. 56 (Zelzer 2004: 263. 11–12, 15–16, alternatively 29–30, 31–2).

([15]) If Noret (1999) is right and the *DP* was written at least a decade after the actual event, not in 646 as maintained by Sherwood (1952: 18, 53), the Augustinian passages have instead been *taken out* of the argument.

([16]) Many thanks to Richard Price for suggesting this possibility and for allowing me to consult his translation of the Lateran *acta* prior to its publication.

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([17]) See *Civ.Dei* 5. 10 on the notion that God possesses attributes willingly.

Johannes Börjesson

Johannes Börjesson is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge.

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Divine Providence and the Gnomic Will Before Maximus

Bronwen Neil

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'All doctrines are concerned either with God or with visible and invisible things or with Providence and judgement about them', pronounced Maximus in the *Centuries on Love* (*Car.* 1.78). The relationship between the divine and humanity in providence continued to concern Christian philosophers into the fourth century, especially John Chrysostom, the Cappadocians, and Evagrius Ponticus. Their speculations on divine providence, free will, the final restoration of all to God, and the origins of evil were taken up by Maximus the Confessor. His distinction between the gnomic and natural wills is now recognized as one of his major contributions to Byzantine understandings of spiritual anthropology, because it solved a long-standing philosophical problem inherent in divine providence's government over humanity. This chapter considers the solutions to the problem that were offered by Sarapion of Thmuis, Evagrius, Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa.

Keywords: Sarapion of Thmuis, Evagrius Ponticus, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, gnomic will, John Chrysostom, anthropology, providence

'ALL doctrines are concerned either with God or with visible and invisible things or with Providence and judgement about them', pronounced Maximus in the *Centuries on Love* (*Car.* 1. 78, Berthold 1985: 43). The relationship between the divine and humanity in providence has recently been dubbed 'the chief concern of philosophers contemporary with Origen' (Greggs 2009: 54). This concern continued into the fourth century, especially with John Chrysostom, the Cappadocians, and Evagrius. (Raymond Laird 2015 treats the concept of mindset [γνώμη] in John Chrysostom.) Their speculations on divine providence, free will, the final restoration of all to God, and the origins of evil were taken up by Maximus the Confessor. His distinction between the gnomic and natural wills is now recognized as one of his major contributions to Byzantine understandings of spiritual anthropology, because it solved a long-standing philosophical problem inherent in divine providence's government over humanity (see McFarland 2005, 2015). This chapter considers the solutions to the problem that were offered by Sarapion of Thmuis, Evagrius of Pontus, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa.

A Brief History of Providence

Providence, of course, had a long history in western philosophy before Origen, with Plato's theodicy developed in *Laws* Book 10, and a strong Stoic doctrine of fate, which was unalterable and independent of human free will (προαίρεσις). Middle Platonists such as Antiochus of Ascalon (130–68 BCE) regarded fate as a 'material cause' (like time, matter, and other things which were necessary to produce an effect but were not sufficient to do so) rather than an 'efficient cause', thus leaving room for human initiative (p. 236) (Antiochus of Ascalon, *Fragmenta*, Luck 1953). Philo of Alexandria (30 BCE–45 CE) took it up in the first century, with an emphasis on human freedom. Philo's formulation that God aids souls in their quest for freedom in proportion to their love and devotion for God and for their fellow human beings was to have a profound impact on Origen (Moore 2005). A new phase in philosophical speculation on providence and free will in the third century was introduced by Plotinus, the father of neo-Platonism

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(204–70). His opponents were the Epicureans, who denied providence; the Peripatetics, who believed that it did not extend to the world below the moon; and the Gnostics, including Manicheans, who believed that the material world was made by an evil creator (Armstrong 1967/3: 38). Plotinus included two sections on fate (εἱμαρμένη, meaning 'that which is allotted, decreed by fate': Liddell et al. 1996: 1093) in *Enneads* 2. 3 'On Whether the Stars are Causes' and 3. 1 'On Destiny'. Providence (πρόνοια) is treated in *Enneads* 3. 2 and 3. 3, these two tracts being the only place in the *Enneads* where Plotinus speaks of the *logos*, meaning 'a rational forming principle, of the whole universe' (Armstrong 1967/3: 38). Plotinus' understanding of the role of human freedom in relation to providence is unclear (Meredith 1999: 20–1). He seems to insist upon it in the following passage:

> If everything was providence and nothing but providence, then providence would not exist; for what would it have to provide for? There would be nothing but the divine … But it [sc. the law of providence] says that those who have become good shall have a good life, now, and laid up for them hereafter as well, and the wicked the opposite.
>
> (*Enn.* 3. 2. 9, Armstrong 1967/3: 73; see also *Enn.* 3. 2. 10)

In other places he seems to favour a divine providence or 'necessity' that is working towards the good of all: 'Since, then, men are not the best of living creatures but the human species occupies a middle position, and has chosen it, yet all the same it is not allowed by providence to perish in the place where it is set but is always being lifted up to the higher regions by all sorts of devices which the divine uses to give virtue the great power …' (*Enn.* 3. 2. 9, Armstrong 1967/3: 75).

Plotinus' contemporary Origen was never a systematic thinker, and his discussion of the origin of evil in *On First Principles*, like his hints at a doctrine of universal salvation, were occasional and inconsistent (*Princ.* 2. 9. 5–8; Crouzel–Simonetti 1978: 360–72). Origen's doctrine of diversity nominates free will, resulting in defection from the good, as the cause of differences in moral calibre among human beings and heavenly beings, and their accordingly diverse fates. Origen suggested that the devil was one such pre-existent soul that fell from heaven through satiety, born of the eternal proximity of pre-existent souls to God. Many souls fell with him, the devil and other demons into cool, gross bodies, angels into warmer, finer bodies. The degree of corporeal reality thus correlated with the measure of sin in the individual fall. Human beings had fallen into the world as a result of the same sin, midway between heaven and hell, being neither as gross as demons nor as fine as angels. The origin of sin was thus movement (κίνησις), or the capacity to fall away from God. This idea can probably be traced back to Plato (p. 237) (Romanides 1968: 208). Sarapion and Gregory of Nyssa picked up different threads of Origen's idea of the origin of sin, as we will see.

Sarapion of Thmuis

Sarapion of Thmuis, a student of the Alexandrian school and later bishop, is indicative of the Origenist milieu of the fourth century. Although no direct influence from Sarapion can be proved, his ideas, like those of Evagrius, on providence, free will, and the doctrine of universal salvation can be seen to have many similarities with those of Gregory of Nyssa. Sarapion was made bishop of Thmuis sometime after 325 and definitely by 339. In his time, Thmuis was a flourishing city in the Nile Delta, north-east of Alexandria. Although he was a member of the Origenist school, Sarapion was typical of Antiochene theologians in that he was concerned with prophecy and providence, rather than 'history' (Herbel 2011: 36–7). Sarapion is a good example of the intersection of Christian theology with Graeco-Roman philosophy, coming up with a new take on the subject of providence.

Sarapion's treatment of free will is found in his tract *Against the Manicheans*, a work that dates to his period as bishop. Although Manichean views of free will, providence, and evil are not described in the work, we know something about Manichean cosmology and anthropology from the works of Augustine and Leo the Great (440–61). Leo (*Ep.* 15) warned that Manichean astrology threatened to undermine God's providence, and led to the abnegation of moral responsibility (Schipper–van Oort 2000: 52). Manichean astrology dictated the worship of the sun and the moon in their soteriological function as 'Vessels of Light', and the mapping of the twelve signs of the zodiac onto different parts of the body. Manicheans believed that evil had a substance that was manifest in the physical body, and that the human body is evil because it was created out of the five great powers (archons) of Darkness. The soul, though being Light, could sin by forgetting its divine origins. For the Manicheans, sin 'is not an act of one's own volition but a temporary loss of consciousness by the soul' (Lieu 1992: 24–5).

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Sarapion, writing from a Christianized Stoic perspective, perhaps used as a model the neo-Platonist Alexander of Lycopolis' tract against the Manicheans, which was also concerned with moral responsibility and free will (Herbel 2011: 22). Manichees had their own doctrine of *apokatastasis*: the cosmic struggle between the kingdom of light and kingdom of darkness would end with the ultimate restoration of the unredeemed light elements which had been trapped by the darkness (Lieu 1992: 17). On *apokatastasis*, Sarapion agreed with earlier Alexandrian thinkers, Clement and Origen, that Hades served the function of correction by teaching self-control, one of the central Stoic virtues— he even applied correction to the demons (Herbel 2011: 25–6). Hades was not a place where never-ending torment was inflicted, but a temporary 'correctional facility', to use a modern phrase (*Contra Man*. 30. 1–9, Herbel 2011: 98). Sarapion believed that the power of choice (προαίρεσις) was uncorrupted by sin but sickened by it through the (p. 238) devil's interference (*Contra Man.* 29. 29–31, Herbel 2011: 98): 'For free-will (προαίρεσις), whether in the state of understanding or in the state of falling, nevertheless has not been released from being reasonable but retains this [state] incorrupt.' Herbel observes that Sarapion used the term 'free will' (προαίρεσις) in a Stoic sense where it meant 'a deliberate moral choice or purpose', as well as the power of making such a choice or decision, that is, a part of one's psychology (2011: 28–9).

Evagrius of Pontus

Evagrius of Pontus (d. 399), a disciple of the Cappadocians, found Origenism most applicable to the monastic community he sought to create in the Egyptian desert ascetic centres of Nitria and Kellia, after his return from Jerusalem. He was the author of various treatises on the ascetical life for monks in the Egyptian desert, such as *The Practical Treatise*, also known simply as *The Monk*, and the *Gnostic Centuries*. Evagrius' Origenist doctrine of prayer and the spiritual life was intended to enable the soul to regain the state of being a pure mind, as it was before the Fall (Louth 1996: 38). According to the Origenist myth of origins, pure souls, which were originally incorporeal, once enjoyed unfettered contemplation of God. As the heavenly being Satan grew tired of such perfect enjoyment, he and other heavenly beings fell from heaven. The souls fell into the bodies of angels, human beings, and demons, in descending order as the sin was greater. Thus the embodiment of human beings was seen as a punishment, and as the end result of abandoning perfect rest in God through movement away from God (the triad of rest–movement–embodiment) (Blowers–Wilken 2003: 24–7). Evagrius believed that movement of the soul was the cause of evil (*Keph.* 1. 51, Guillaumont 1958: 40–3), echoing Origen's doctrine that movement was the cause of sin. Evagrius identified two causes of evil: first, bad thoughts inspired by demons; and second, evil thoughts inspired by our fallen will.

Maximus and Evagrius both distinguished between bodily passions—such as hunger, thirst, and lust—and passions of the soul. The bodily passions do not concern us here. The passions of the soul which are problematic are those which are 'contrary to nature' (*Car.* 2. 16), not those natural passions which are natural. The natural passions, or those in accordance with our unfallen nature, are perfectly appropriate if directed towards God. The eight principal 'unnatural' passions of the soul according to Evagrius were gluttony, fornication, avarice, grief, anger, listlessness or *accidie*, vainglory, and pride.

Maximus adopted these eight principal passions in the *Ambigua Addressed to John*, the bishop of Cyzicus in Asia Minor. Following Plato's three-part division of the soul, he explained how each part is affected by particular passions (*Amb.Io.* 10. 44). The three Platonic divisions of the soul were (1) the rational, (2) the irrational incensive (*irascibile*), and (3) the irrational desiring (*concupiscibile*) parts. The rational part of the soul is affected by the passions of vainglory and pride. Elsewhere Maximus identified pride as the combination of two vices vainglory and arrogance. 'Arrogance denies the Cause of (p. 239) virtue and nature, while vainglory adulterates natures and virtue themselves. The arrogant accomplish nothing godly, and the vainglorious produce nothing natural. Pride is a combination of these two vices' (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1980: 221; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 162). The irrational incensive part, the source of the soul's energy, is affected by grief and anger. The irrational desiring part is affected by gluttony, fornication, and avarice. All three are affected by *accidie* or listlessness. Maximus gave a prominent place to passions with social consequences such as fear, resentment, and envy (*Car.* 3.90–1), which Evagrius either ignored or subsumed (Louth 1996: 39). There are two elements of the passionate part of the soul, controlling and disordering our emotions. These are the incensive faculty, that is, the source of the soul's energy, and the desiring faculty of the soul. The passions link the soul to the physical world (*Car.* 3. 56). When the intellect is filled with God, incensiveness is transformed into divine love (ἀγάπη), and desire into intense longing for God (ἔρως) (*Car*. 2. 48). That is why Maximus can speak of 'the blessed passion of holy love' as the goal of the spiritual

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life, through the transformation of the incensive and the desiring faculties of the soul in *Car.* 3. 67 (Louth 1996: 40–1).

While Maximus clearly owed a great debt to Evagrius, a number of crucial differences can be identified in his theory of the passions. Five of these stand out as of major importance.

(1) Evagrius' Origenist doctrine of prayer and the spiritual life is intended to enable the soul 'to regain the state of being a pure mind from which it has fallen', but for Maximus, the spiritual life is about living a life of love in community (Louth 1996: 38). Unlike Evagrius, Maximus does not accept the dualistic doctrine of Origen concerning the relationship between our body and our soul. Maximus described a different order of events in the soul's progress towards God, starting with the soul's birth into a body, followed by its movement towards God, and culminating in the soul finding rest in God (embodiment—movement—rest) (Blowers–Wilken 2003: 24–7). Thus, according to Maximus, movement of the soul is not evil in itself, and can be directed by reason: 'the soul moves according to reason when the desiring part is ruled by self-restraint, when the irascible part turns away from sin and attains to charity, and when reason directs itself to God through prayer and spiritual knowledge' (*Car.* 4. 15).
(2) For Evagrius the passions are points of attack for demons, and must be transcended. For Maximus, however, they are neutral in themselves and can be transformed into vices, which are contrary to our pre-fallen nature, or virtues, which are in conformity with our pre-fallen nature (Viller 1930: 181). While Evagrius identified the two causes of evil as bad thoughts inspired by demons and evil thoughts inspired by our fallen will, Maximus identifies three causes of evil: the passions, demons, and the fallen will (*Car.* 2. 33, 3. 93, Viller, 1930: 180 and n.97). The fallen will does not accord with our natural will, that which is in conformity with God's will for us.
(3) The passions are for Evagrius simply a register of the state of the soul, and are thus only of interest to the individual quest for enlightenment. Maximus, however, sees the passions as the product of our relationships with others (p. 240) (Louth 1996: 30). Not for Maximus the dispassionate life of a hermit! Maximus puts the emphasis on love expressed in relationship. The spiritual disciple needs a guide or teacher because the attainment of impassibility, or immunity to the passions (ἀπάθεια), can lead to the passions of vainglory and pride, to which the only antidote is humility, expressed in obedience to a spiritual father or mother.
(4) Whereas Evagrius uses the notions of an obsessive chain of thought (λογισμός) and passion interchangeably (Viller 1930: 181 n.102), for Maximus obsessive chains of thought are the precedents to a passion. So, for example, debilitating sexual desire would be an obsessive chain of thought, while fornication would be the passion resulting from putting this thought into action. For a monk, any degree of sexual desire was seen as inappropriate, while for a non-celibate lay person, lust was regarded as a normal bodily passion. First the passions have to be removed, before one can deal with the chains of thought. When one's thoughts are 'mere thoughts' and do not incite the passions, the highest state of detachment has been reached (*Car.* 1. 93). Not all λογίσμοι are intrinsically evil, however. There are also natural λογίσμοι worthy of the soul engaged in contemplating and knowing divine mysteries (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1980: 211).
(5) Unlike Evagrius, Maximus believed that it is not enough for a Christian to achieve freedom from the passions and gain a purely intellectual attachment to the truth and divine knowledge. For Maximus the spiritual life must be practised in a community of at least two persons, namely, the disciple and a spiritual father or mother (*Car.* 3. 66). Maximus' belief in the possibility of personal transformation in this life is rather different from the typical western emphasis of Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and others on the notion of the essential flaw in our natures caused by original sin, which stops us from being united to God if we are not redeemed through baptism. The Greek emphasis typified by Maximus is rather on restored human nature, which was the purpose and consequence of the Incarnation of Christ in human form. As Maximus put it, 'For it was necessary, necessary in truth, for him to become the light unto that earth … so that … he might wondrously liberate human nature from its bondage to these things under the Evil One, and endow it with the inextinguishable light of true knowledge and the indefatigable power of the virtues' (*Q.Thal.* 64, Laga–Steel 1980: 197; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 150). His focus is not on human corruption but incorruption, which is first received when the Christian is baptized in Christ through the Holy Spirit (*Cap. XV* 1. 87).

Gregory of Nazianzus

The *Dispute with Pyrrhus* provides clear evidence of the influence of Gregory of Nazianzus. In July 645 Maximus

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undertook a debate with the monothelite patriarch of Constantinople, Pyrrhus, at Carthage. Pyrrhus had been sent to resolve the abbot's (p. 241) steadfast resistance to the *Ekthesis* promulgated by Heraclius and Patriarch Sergius in 638. In his long debate with Maximus, as it is preserved by one of Maximus' circle, Pyrrhus appeared simply confused, and totally unable to match the verbal sophistry of the Confessor, or his ability to pluck authoritative sources out of the air (Doucet 1972).

Maximus started the debate by citing a famous passage from Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oration* 30, his third discourse on the Trinity, on Christ's human will: 'For his will is not opposed [to God] but completely deified' (Gallay 1978: 248. 5–6), the same passage later cited by Pyrrhus (*DP,* PG 91. 316C). Maximus continued: 'Thus he possesses a human will, only it was not opposed to God. This will was not at all gnomic but properly natural, eternally formed and moved by its essential Godhead to the fulfilment of the economy' (*DP,* PG 91. 308D–309A).

Christ's human will is described as an instrument of providence ('the fulfilment of the divine economy'), while everyone else's gnomic will is constrained by ignorance and sin. As a result of Christ assuming a human will in the Incarnation, human beings can gradually return to a state of conformity with the will of God, according to Gregory of Nazianzus' famous principle that 'only that which was assumed by Christ can be redeemed' (*Ep.* 101. 32 to Cledonius).[1]

Like the activity or operation, the will for Maximus was natural, not personal ('hypostatic'), although it emanated from the person. Our capacity to will is natural; how we will, the process of willing, is personal. According to this distinction, natural will is 'an essential property of the unalterable natural definition (λόγος φυσέως) of each being' (Murphy–Sherwood 1990: 276–8). Pyrrhus objected that if will were natural, it would therefore be necessary, thus excluding all free human movement, a synonym for freedom. Maximus answered that Christ is self-determining (αὐτεξούσιος) like all human beings, but Christ's was the only human will that was truly free, that is, free to conform to the divine will of God (PG 91. 324D1–9). Although Maximus does not say so, I understand this to be because Christ was not created with original sin. Maximus insists that human will is only 'self-determining' to the extent that it conforms to the archetype of the divine image: 'If human beings are the image of the divine nature, and the divine nature is self-determining, therefore the image is self-determining; in so far as the image conforms to the archetype, they are self-determining in nature' (PG 91. 324D 2–5).

Gregory of Nyssa

Evidence for Gregory of Nyssa's influence on Maximus' doctrine of providence comes from a little-known text, *Testimonies and Syllogisms* (*TS*). This is a collection of excerpts from a tract by Maximus or his disciple and close friend, Anastasius Apocrisiarius, who (p. 242) died in exile in 668, some six years after the death of Maximus.[2] The excerpts were attributed in the prologue to Hippolytus, bishop of Portus Romanus (d. *c.*236), against the heretics Beron and Helicon, who are otherwise unknown (Neil 2006: 130–3). The excerpts were later incorporated in *Doctrina Patrum*, a collection of doctrinal statements from the late seventh century that has been attributed to both Anastasius Apocrisiarius and Anastasius Sinaita (Diekamp 1981: 312–26; trans. Neil 2006: 266–303).[3] In the *Testimonies*, we find a clear statement of the ransom theory that was first articulated in the East by Gregory of Nyssa, based on Mark 10: 45 and 1 Timothy 2: 5–6:

> For on this account the God of all was made human, so that, by suffering indeed in passible flesh, he might ransom all our race which had been sold to death; but by his impassible divinity working miracles through the flesh, so that he might lead it back to the immortal and blessed life, from which it had fallen by obeying the devil; and so that he might reestablish the holy heavenly orders of intellectual substances in unchangeability by the mystery of his enfleshment, whose task is the recapitulation of all to him.
>
> (*TS, Extract* 2, Neil 2006: 272–4)

The 'holy heavenly orders of intellectual substances' are surely the angels and demons who fell with Satan. The whole of the human race is said to be ransomed by Christ's suffering in the flesh, leaving no one unsaved—unless through their own choice. Observe that there is no mention here of Christ's death as a ransom paid *to the devil*, a formulation that was unique to Gregory of Nyssa.

What implications did this have for humanity, and the possibility of the final restoration of all? Or, to put the question

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another way, how did Maximus resolve the tension of a power of choice that was made in the image of God, without ascribing our tendency to choose vice over virtue to the devil's interference? Like Sarapion, Gregory believed that our free will or power of choice is divinely imprinted, but how we exercise it—whether towards vice or virtue—is up to us to determine. Unlike Sarapion, he believed that our capacity for freedom of choice is fundamentally blighted by the devil. According to Gregory, human involvement in evil occurs either by one's own free choice or through the contagion of ancestral sin. Both Sarapion and Gregory, for the most part, viewed Hades or hell as a temporary estrangement from God, where sins would be purged (*In inscriptiones Psalmorum* 2. 14, McDonough and Alexander 1986: 155. 11).[4] In other places, however, Gregory acknowledged the exclusion of sinners from heaven and the threat of eternal punishment (e.g. *Or.cat.* 40, Mühlenberg 1996: 105. 14–106. 6; *De infantibus*, Downing–McDonough–Hörner 1987: 87. 11).

A second text that witnesses to the influence of Gregory of Nyssa comes from the *Dispute at Bizya,* a debate between Maximus and Theodosius, bishop of Caesarea in (p. 243) Bithynia. It was held at the fort of Bizya where Maximus was held during his first exile, in 656. Although Bishop Theodosius, as representative of the patriarch of Constantinople, attempted a conciliatory approach, the tone was set by Maximus' peremptory reply to his first question:

> THEODOSIUS: 'How are you, my lord Father?'
>
> MAXIMUS SAID TO HIM: 'As God pre-ordained before all ages a way of life for me in his providence, that's how I am.'
>
> THEODOSIUS: 'How can you say that? Did God pre-ordain our individual destinies before all time?'
>
> MAXIMUS: 'If he had foreknowledge assuredly he pre-ordained as well.'
>
> THEODOSIUS: 'What is the exact meaning of the words "had foreknowledge" and "pre-ordained"?'
>
> MAXIMUS: 'Foreknowledge pertains to thoughts and words and actions which come from us. Predestination pertains to those accidents which do not come from us.'
>
> THEODOSIUS: 'What is the nature of those matters which are from us, and what is the nature of those which are not from us?'
>
> (*DB* 3, Allen–Neil 2002: 77, 79)

This is the only direct reference to providence (πρόνοια) in the seven documents of the dossier, and it introduces a debate on the nature of the wills and energies in Christ. This opening exchange demonstrates three important points: (1) the monoenergist/monothelite controversy grew out of a concern with God's providence and foreknowledge of human actions; (2) foreknowledge pertains to acts of volition, while pre-ordination pertains to punishments and rewards, which respond to acts of volition; and (3) Maximus believed that transgressing the commandments could commit one to the eternal fire.

The distinction that Maximus makes between 'things which are from us' and 'those which are not from us' recalls Aristotle. Maximus elaborated upon the distinction thus:

> The matters which are from us are all acts of choosing, that is to say, virtues and vices. Those which are not from us are inflictions of kinds of punishments which happen to us, or their opposites. I mean that neither the punishment of illness is from us, nor the gladness of good health, although the operating causes of these states [do originate from us]. For example, the cause of illness is intemperance, just as the cause of good health is temperance, and the cause of the kingdom of heaven is the keeping of the commandments, just as the cause of eternal fire, too, is transgressing them.
>
> (*DB* 3, Allen–Neil 2002: 79, modified)

Later in the debate, Theodosius asked Maximus if he would admit that there was in any sense one will or activity in Christ. Maximus again cites Gregory of Nyssa in the guise of 'the Fathers':

> It is impossible for me ever to say this. And I'll tell you the reason: because it is a saying foreign to the holy

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> Fathers to speak of one will and activity of two different (p. 244) natures … For if I say that [the will and the activity] are natural, I am afraid of confusing them. If I say that they are hypostatic, I divide the Son from the Father and the Spirit, and I will appear to be introducing three wills which are incongruent with each other, as is the case too with the hypostases … If I say that they are dispositional, I introduce Nestorius' division of persons. If I say that they are contrary to nature, I corrupt the existence of the will; *for what is contrary to nature is a corruption to the nature*, as the Fathers said.
>
> (*DB* 5, Allen–Neil 2002: 101, modified)

The final formulation, 'for what is contrary to nature is a corruption to the nature', is borrowed from Gregory of Nyssa's tract against Apollinaris of Laodicea (*Antirr.adu.Apol.*, Mueller 1958: 207. 8–9). In this tract and another to Theophilus against the followers of Apollinaris, Gregory sought to expose the Apollinarian doctrines—that the body of Christ came down from heaven and that the Logos was the soul of Jesus on earth—as denying the existence of Christ's human soul. Maximus appropriated the phraseology from a fourth-century doctrinal controversy to solve the problems of another, monothelitism.

The Final Restoration of All Things?

Maximus' position on the question of the final restoration of all things to God (ἀποκατάστασις) is difficult to resolve. Andreas Andreopoulos will take this up in another chapter (Andreopoulos 2015), so let me confine myself to a few remarks. Even Origen, who put forward the idea in *On First Principles* (*Princ. pref.* 6. 1, Koetschau 1913: 79. 3–4) and his commentaries on Romans and on John,[5] later repudiated the doctrine. Gregory of Nyssa at least left the possibility open, maintaining in *Or.cat.* 26 that the Incarnation had restored all humanity and even the devil to God (Mühlenberg 1996: 66. 4–6). This did not disallow human beings the opportunity to cooperate in their salvation, however, by choosing virtue over vice. Maximus seemed to accept Gregory's teaching on *apokatastasis,* while preserving an 'honourable silence' for pastoral reasons. *Contra* this interpretation, Maximus spoke clearly of the eternity of hell in the *Dispute at Bizya* (*DB* 3, Allen–Neil 1999: 77), as we have seen, and again in *On the Lord's Prayer*: 'Indeed there exists but one happiness, a communion of life with the Word, the loss of which is an endless punishment which goes on for all eternity' (*Or.dom.* 4, Berthold 1985: 112). Similarly, in *Questions and Doubts*, Maximus expresses doubts about the possibility of eternal happiness: 'Since assaults on the mind and lust are harmful, it is no wonder that evil will have no end' (*QD* 31, PG 90. 812B). The apparent contradiction here may be resolved by reference to the *TS*. In the first excerpt, the unknown author (possibly Maximus) affirms: 'By the will of God which is of unlimited power, all things were made, and all things made are saved, each thing (p. 245) conserved appropriately to its own internal designs (Lat. *rationes*, Gk. λόγοι)' (*Extract* 1, Neil 2006: 268–70). Each being is conserved according to its own internal design. That this is the opening statement of a tract on the two natural wills and energies in Christ is an affirmation of the importance of this foundation to the ratiocinations that follow. This text may allow us to resolve the apparent contradiction in Maximus' acceptance of Gregory of Nyssa's restoration of all things, *and* the possibility of eternal damnation for some beings in hell. The salvation of each being 'according to its own internal design' allows human beings the opportunity to renege on their salvation by choosing vice over virtue. For both theologians, however, universal restoration was not just something that was to happen in the future: it has in a sense already happened in the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ. For both, however, it was limited in the future to those who were perfected in virtue (Max., *QD* 13, PG 90. 796A–C). There is a similarly close nexus between the Resurrection and final restoration in Gregory of Nyssa, as this passage from *On the Soul and Resurrection* shows:

> The resurrection is [the first act of] the restitution of our nature in its pristine condition … Human nature had been God's workmanship before humankind became overpowered by sin. Original sinfulness resulted in humankind being invaded by its present infirmities. Therefore we must deny that the one who succumbs to vice is driven by a blind necessity on account of natural infirmities.
>
> (*Anim. et res.* 10, Barrois 1986: 12–13, modified)

The implication is that individual human destinies depend, not on blind necessity, but on individual human choices, determined by each λόγος: God already knows what each person will choose (*DB* 3). God only pre-ordains our final end in the sense that there is a divinely established system of punishments and rewards for disobeying or obeying the commandments respectively. The goal of this pre-ordaining is harmony in community, as Maximus

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stressed in *Chapters on Love*:

> The purpose of Providence is to unify in upright faith and spiritual love those who have been separated in diverse ways by vice. Indeed it was because of this that the Savior suffered, 'to gather together into one the children of God who were dispersed' (John 11: 52). Therefore, the one who does not endure disturbances or bear up under distress or undergo hardships walks outside divine love and the purpose of Providence.
>
> (*Car.* 4. 17, Berthold 1985: 77)

A Realistic Vision of Conformation to the Divine Will

Maximus' vision is arguably more realistic than that of any of his predecessors—Origen, Sarapion, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, or Evagrius. According to Maximus, human beings can gradually return to a state of conformity with the will of God, as the (p. 246) result of Christ assuming a human will in the Incarnation. However, this is a matter of choosing virtue over vice. Maximus implies that 'heaven' is a state of rest (στάσις), a possibility denied by Gregory of Nyssa. It has a degree of permanence, as does its opposite, Hades. As well as this, Maximus rehabilitated movement, or the propensity to fall away from the presence of God (κίνησις), from being the origin of sin as it had been in Origen's pre-mundane fall.

Having both a gnomic and natural will gives human beings the potential to become self-determining—it is necessary for our autonomy. As Isaac Bashevis Singer (1984: 3) put it: 'We must believe in free will. We have no choice.' If our natural (free) will were restored to perfection, we would have no need of gnomic will. This is the happy condition of the saints who dwell with God. Freedom of will as we understand it post-Enlightenment was not actually a Byzantine ideal. Free will is not a natural human right but a faculty that human beings (as well as demons) lost in the Fall. The power of self-determination is a different capacity, namely, the right to movement.

With Maximus' breaking of the nexus between nature and person, he opened the way for future theologians to get beyond the christological disputes that had plagued Byzantium for four centuries. He presented a possible explanation for the disjunction between God's providential plan and the shabby human condition that did not demand recourse to personal intervention by the devil. He absolved human beings of the origins of evil, by positing a human will that had to deliberate over the choice between good and evil because of the constraints of ignorance and sin, while in no way diminishing human responsibility. It was an ingenious solution to a problem that had been gnawing away at philosophers since the time of Plato, if not before, but it was a solution that could not have been achieved without the foundations laid by previous thinkers, not least Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Evagrius.

Suggested Reading

On the Stoic philosophical background to questions of free will and causal determinism, see Bobzien 1998. Representative of recent scholarship on Cappadocian teaching on providence and the will are Meredith 1999, McGuckin 2001, Ludlow 2007 and 2009. Daley 2002 gives a good treatment of Nyssa's tract *Against Apollinarius.* Laird 2012 and 2015 treat the concept of gnomic will in John Chrysostom. On Maximus' teaching on the universal restoration, see von Balthasar 1988; and for the opposing view that Maximus rejected *apokatastasis*, Daley 2002. Stăniloae 1994 analyses Maximus' rehabilitation of the Origenian view of movement. There is an excellent discussion of this in Blowers–Wilken (2003: 24–7). McFarland 2007 draws out the anthropological implications of seating the will in nature and not in person with admirable skill and clarity, and explores the differences between Augustine and Maximus on the will. For further discussion of Augustine's and Maximus' views on vice and virtue, and the workings of the will, see Neil 2003 and Börjesson 2015.

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Notes:

([1]) This passage is also cited by Maximus in *Opusc.* 7 (PG 91. 81C–D) and *Opusc.* 15 (PG 91. 160D–161A).

([2]) He was also the author of the letter to Theodosius of Gangra (*Ep.Anast.*, Allen–Neil 1999: 172–89).

([3]) The text has been preserved in its earliest form in the Latin translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, papal librarian and anti-pope of the late ninth century.

([4]) Also *Or.cat.* 5. See further, Sachs 1993.

([5]) *Rom.* 5.10, PG 14. 1053A–B; *Rom.* 9. 41, PG 14. 1243C–1244A; *Joh.* 1.16, PG 14. 49C.

Bronwen Neil

Bronwen Neil is an assistant professor and assistant director of the Centre for Early Christian Studies at Australian Catholic University, Brisbane.

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Exegesis of Scripture

Paul M. Blowers

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Abstract and Keywords

Exegesis is for Maximus not simply a methodical exposition of the layers of meaning in scripture but an interpretative 'dance' in which the exegete must pursue the elusive but ever-present Logos who is the guide to the mysteries at the heart of biblical revelation. Along the way, this chapter will accentuate Maximus' dependence on the work of his most prolific exegetical predecessors (especially Origen, the Cappadocians, and Cyril of Alexandria) and outline some of his more typical strategies for plumbing the moral and spiritual depths of scripture. It will also give account, in context, of the nature and genre of Maximus' major exegetical works (namely, the *Q.Thal.*, *QD*, and *Q.Theop.*). It is of no little importance that Maximus' exegesis thrives, not on line-by-line commentary of biblical texts, but on the model of *aporiae*, in which scripture is seen as purposively posing dilemmas and challenges for the interpretive quest.

Keywords: exegesis, scripture, interpretation, aporiae, biblical commentary, Origen, the Cappadocians, Cyril of Alexandria, revelation, Logos

MAXIMUS the Confessor stands historically against the backdrop of an expansive landscape of patristic hermeneutical and exegetical traditions that extend back to the first and second centuries CE and came of age in the fourth and fifth centuries, when Christian commentary on the Bible truly burgeoned and diversified. Although there is much crisscrossing and overlap in those traditions, two were decisive to Maximus' formation as a biblical interpreter: first, the Alexandrian tradition of Philo and Origen, especially as appropriated and adjusted by the Cappadocian Fathers and by Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite; second, and closely related, the eastern monastic tradition, which treated the Bible as a treasury of ascetical narratives and exempla, already hagiographic in its own right and instructive of the φιλοσοφία of Christian life.

Maximus' Origenian Inheritance

Few hermeneutical treatises from Christian antiquity enjoyed the extensive influence of Book 4 of Origen's *On First Principles*. But as Brian Daley has observed, Origen's exposition is less about strictly defined rules of interpretation per se than about the nature of Scripture as an ordered economy (οἰκονομία) of divine revelation (Daley 1998). Indeed, Origen here and in his commentaries and homilies aspired to discern the internal dynamics whereby the Logos, as mediator of revelation and as universal pedagogue, accommodated himself through the vessels of human text and language to the diverse spiritual aptitudes of rational creatures. The Logos in some sense inscribed or 'incarnated' himself in the written word of scripture, in a bid to maximize the spiritual nourishment and healing communicated through the sacred texts. Indeed, the analogy between text and flesh is a crucial one in Origen's hermeneutics. Each is a veil of the divinity of the Word, but also a filter of his manifestation, as dramatically registered in the Transfiguration, where Christ's luminous garments symbolized the text or words of (p. 254) the written Gospels (Origen, *Matt.* 12.36–43; see also Harl 1958: 249–54). And though the eternal Logos transcends the created world, his self-revelation vindicates and redeems the materiality and corporeality in which

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salvation history plays out, in a cosmic mission to enfold fallen rational beings back into the bosom of intimate union with him.

This Alexandrian Christian notion of divine *accommodation* through scripture is as basic for Maximus as it is for all the Greek Fathers, and he further improvizes on it in his developed theory of the Logos' immanence in the λογοί of scripture, of which more will be said in the section entitled 'Exegesis and "Scriptural Contemplation"'. The principle of accommodation had also informed and shaped Origen's teaching on two other important hermeneutical themes. One was his doctrine of the useful 'obstacles' (σκάνδαλα) or difficulties divinely implanted in the biblical text to spur interpreters from complacency and to prompt all readers to deeper exploration of scripture's riches (*Princ*. 4. 2. 9, Crouzel–Simonetti 1980: 334–6). Second was his commitment to the *polyvalence* of scripture, its yielding of multiple valid senses through which the pedagogy of the Logos was fitted to believers' levels of worthiness and maturity. Although Origen spoke of the 'body', 'soul', and 'spirit' of scripture in signalling the gamut of literal and figurative meanings (*Princ*. 4. 2. 4, Crouzel–Simonetti 1980: 312), he often defaulted to the simple distinction between 'literal' and 'spiritual' meaning and established a precedent for fluidity and dynamism in identifying the various non-literal nuances of any biblical text. Both on the concept of σκάνδαλα and on the economy of multiple senses of scripture, Maximus did not stray far from Origen's hermeneutical template, as will be demonstrated further on.

Maximus' Monastic Inheritance

In Byzantine monasticism the interpretation and use of the Bible assumed various related trajectories, three of which were preponderant in Maximus' background. One was the strongly pragmatist tradition of the desert elders, well represented in sources such as the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (*Apophthegmata Patrum*) or the *Questions and Responses* of the Palestinian sages Barsanuphius and John. These works reflect a 'desert hermeneutic' (Burton-Christie 1993) that valorized the oral transmission of scriptural knowledge, discouraged speculative theological interpretations, and consistently treated the biblical text as a script for ascetical performance. Reiterating Origen's principle of 'transposition' (μετάληψις), biblical characters were often rendered forerunners or exemplars of the monastic vocation, whose experience could be transposed into the lives of monks in the present. Maximus evidences this pattern when, for example, he recommends that the ascetic become a 'spiritual' Melchizedek or Moses or David by imitating their virtues (*Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1144A–B).

If Booth (2013) and Boudignon (2004) are correct in stating that Maximus was of Palestinian provenance and strongly connected to the anchoritic culture of the desert through John Moschus and Sophronius, his dependence on this tradition would be all (p. 255) the more plausible. As it stands, the ethos of this desert hermeneutic clearly appears in Maximus' *LA*, which, as a literary piece, assumes the familiar form of a 'conference' between an elder (γερών) and his disciple on monastic φιλοσοφία as a way of salvation and transformation. This work is saturated with didactically styled quotations of scripture intended to focus the disciple on the exigencies of ascetical life (Argárate 2008). When, for instance, the disciple broaches the dilemma of how a monk can truly 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5: 17), a *topos* in early monastic tradition, the elder responds by defining unceasing prayer as clinging to God with desire, hope, and courage, in the knowledge that nothing severs us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8: 35–8) and that we endure suffering without being forsaken (2 Cor. 4: 8–10) (*LA*, Van Deun 2000a: 49–53). When the disciple asks why he finds himself bereft of compunction, the deep sorrow for sin, the elder inundates him with extensive quotations of prophetic and Pauline texts about the stark reality of divine judgement (*LA*, Van Deun 2000a: 53–111).

A second relevant trajectory of monastic interpretation of the Bible was the tradition of Byzantine hagiography that was already richly developed by Maximus' time. Monastic hagiographers regularly made sophisticated intertextual links between the narratives of sainted biblical characters and the holy ascetics of the recent past deemed worthy of having their story told in imaginatively enhanced form. The *Life of Daniel the Stylite* (sixth century) is such a work, which profiles Daniel's origins and monastic vocation using conspicuous parallels from the life of Jesus himself. Scriptural narrative provides the precedential drama, as it were, in which new players fill the roles vacated by the great exemplars of the past. Maximus had access to the Byzantine hagiographical tradition through his connections with Sophronius and John Moschus, both of whom had composed hagiographical writings. But his single foray into hagiography, if authentically his work, is the *Life of the Virgin* in Georgian translation (Shoemaker 2012), a text that sets out Mary's life and deeds as the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and, being the New Eve, the

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embodiment of all the feminine virtues in the Bible.

Still another trajectory of monastic biblical interpretation, especially formative for Maximus, was the Christian gnostic tradition eminently represented in the exegetical scholia of Evagrius Ponticus. On the one hand, it complemented the 'desert hermeneutic' described earlier, with its similar reverence for the Bible as the source par excellence of proverbial wisdom for training the ascetic. Indeed, scripture for Evagrius was like a glossary of the spiritual life (Géhin 1987: 15–16), a complex web of symbols to be examined diligently for their veiled insights. To take one simple example, Evagrius compares what Jesus calls the 'field of the world' (Matt. 13: 38) with what Proverbs calls the 'field' for which one is to prepare one's works prior to their 'exodus' (Prov. 24: 27). They cannot be the same field. Jesus, Evagrius explains, was alluding to the mundane world, which is the realm of body and soul and of mere sense experience; but Solomon was speaking of the field of the mind, which is noetic and composed of the principles (λόγοι) of the created cosmos.[1] Maximus in his turn suggests (p. 256) that Jesus too had called the heart or mind of the Christian a 'field' in speaking of the 'treasure hidden in the field' (Matt. 13: 44), the treasure being a pure heart that Christ himself personally indwells (*Car*. 4. 70–3, PG 90. 1065A–C). This polyvalence of biblical words and signs was to enrich and advance the interpreter in an ongoing spiritual journey towards the Logos, who held the key to all the interconnections between and among them.

Evagrius also, however, opened the door to a more speculative exegesis such as the *abbas* of the desert discouraged. For him the deep contemplation (θεωρία) of scripture went hand-in-hand with the contemplation of invisible and visible creation, and in the case of both, the interpreter was *ipso facto* also undertaking the exegesis of the self since the human self mirrors the same world, the same 'book of God', as scripture and the macrocosmic order.[2] Maximus similarly integrates the contemplation of scripture, the created world, and the human self:

> He who 'gropes after God' (Acts 17: 27) properly has discretion. Therefore he who comes upon the [scriptural] law's symbols intellectually, and who contemplates the phenomenal nature of created beings scientifically, discriminates within Scripture, creation, and himself. He distinguishes, that is, between the letter (γράμμα) and the spirit (πνεῦμα) in Scripture, between inner principle (λόγος) and outward appearance (ἐπιφάνεια) in creation, and between the intellect (νοῦς) and sense experience (αἴσθησις) in himself, and in turn unites his own intellect indissolubly with the spirit of Scripture and the inner principle of creation. Having done this, he 'discovers God'. For he recognizes, as is necessary and possible, that God is in the mind, and in the inner principle, and in the spirit; yet he is fully removed from everything misleading, everything that drags the mind down into countless opinions, in other words, the letter, the appearance, and his own sense experience … If someone mingles and confuses the letter of the law, the outward appearance of visible things, and his own sense with each other, he is 'blind and short-sighted' (2 Pet 1: 9) and suffers from ignorance of the true Cause of created beings.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 32, Laga–Steel 1980: 225)

Exegesis in this case functioned principally as the negotiation of ever subtler levels of contemplation leading towards sublime knowledge of the Trinity. Contemplation of the sacred history in the Bible was of a piece with the contemplation of the nature of all created things and of the 'providence and judgement' of God over them,[3] such that both the scriptural and natural modes of contemplation would serve the ascetic's initiation in the mystery of θεολογία.

(p. 257) Exegesis and 'Scriptural Contemplation'

Especially in his *Questions and Responses for Thalassius*, Maximus frequently employs the term θεωρία, not in any modern sense of hermeneutical 'theory' but as a virtual synonym for spiritual interpretation, the exegetical component in the quest for contemplative 'vision' of Christ the Logos in all his manifestations. Such was modelled in the experience of the three apostles, Peter, James, and John as they beheld the transfigured Christ on Mt. Tabor. Unlike the Cappadocians and Ps-Dionysius, who favoured the Sinai theophany (with Moses as contemplative) as the premier biblical theophany by which to discern the interrelation between οἰκονομία and θεολογία, Maximus followed Origen in privileging the Transfiguration, where Jesus himself mediated the mystery of his divinity within the context of his incarnate mission, and set the conditions of his own self-revelation (Blowers 2012). Like Origen, Maximus understands Christ's luminous face to symbolize his ineffable divinity (Origen, *Matt*. 12. 37, PG 13. 1069A; Maximus, *Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1128A), and his radiant garments to symbolize the text or words of the written

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Gospels (Origen, *Matt*. 12.36–43, PG 13. 1059–1086; Maximus, *Th.oec.* 2. 14, PG 90. 1132A), or even *all* scripture as an access to the Logos (*Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1128B; *QD* 191, Declerck 1982: 134).

In addition, Maximus posits that the luminous garments of Christ symbolize, not only scripture rendered transparent to its hidden spiritual meanings, *logoi* (λόγοι), but also the order of creation, which is itself like a 'Bible', a 'harmonious web' of the principles/words or *logoi* underlying all created existents. Conversely, the Bible is in its own right 'like another cosmos', composed of its own 'heaven and earth and the things in between, that is, ethical, natural, and theological philosophy' (*Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1128D–1129C; also Blowers 1993). The Logos is the author of both 'books', and of all the *logoi* of scripture and creation, and, through them has pre-evangelized, as it were, the whole of scripture and the whole of the created universe, such that both books are to be 'read' (contemplated) in the light of the mystery that is Jesus Christ. Furthermore, using an idiom reminiscent of Origen and even Paul, Maximus explains that the 'natural law' (creation), the 'written law' (scripture), and the 'spiritual law' of the grace of Christ, while individually distinctive and irreducible, are so deeply insinuated that they must always be viewed in their mutuality and complementarity.[4] In this way, the exegesis of scripture inherently integrates 'natural contemplation', and vice versa.

In *Amb.Io.* 37 (PG 91. 1293A–C; see also Blowers 2002), Maximus spells this out in a rare extended reflection on the nature of exegesis as an essentially contemplative discipline that explores and interprets the 'cosmos' mirrored in scripture. Looking at the grand scheme of scriptural revelation, he proposes ten progressively more (p. 258) subtle modes of contemplation, or interpretation, to guide the reader from the panoramic diversity of scripture's world to the unity-in-diversity revealed in it by Christ the Logos. In the first phase, the interpreter concentrates on the content of scripture according to (1) place (τόπος), (2) time (χρόνος), (3) genus (γένος), (4) individual being or person (πρόσωπον), and (5) dignity (ἀξία) or occupation (ἐπιτήδευμα).[5] These five, the first two of which are drawn from the Aristotelian 'categories', constitute a relatively superficial examination of the basic predications about beings or things as they appear in the text.

From here, however, the interpreter 'contracts' these into three additional modes of contemplation: (6) practical, (7) natural, and (8) theological philosophy. Maximus assumes, in the tradition of Origen and Evagrius, that all scripture has been providentially ordered to inform, shape, and edify the disciple of the Logos. The diligent interpreter must pierce the surface and discern the symbolic connections and configurations that enable 'philosophical' advancement in the moral virtues, the knowledge of created nature, and initiation in the mystery of the Trinity.

These three modes of contemplation are further contracted, Maximus explains, into the dialectic of (9) present (ἐνεστώς) and (10) future (μέλλον), or type (τύπος) and truth (ἀλήθεια). By 'present', he means the whole present age or cosmic order short of its eschatological transformation, which thus includes the world's temporal past as well as present, and so too the partial figures of spiritual realities but not yet their full, future revelation. The *logoi* of scripture and creation are like foreshadowings or prefigurations of the age to come (cf. *Q.Thal*. 22 and 55, Laga–Steel 1980: 143 and 481). At the end of the ten-fold contemplation of scripture, Maximus posits that there is a comprehending principle, or *logos* (λόγος) into which they all are collapsible. This universal *logos* is contained by the Logos himself, the source of all knowledge of, and perspective on, sacred history and on the order of creation. Indeed, the Logos *contains* all the *logoi* but he is also *in* the *logoi* and in some sense *is* the *logoi* (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1081B–C) since they embody his very 'intentions' for each and every creature.[6]

Recognizable in this paradigm of scriptural contemplation (θεωρία γραφική) is the revelatory schema of expansion-and-contraction, procession-and-conversion, already well developed in the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, where the generous overflow of divine illumination radiates down through the ranks of intelligible and sensible creatures. Maximus is less concerned, however, with the ontological hierarchy per se of revelation than with the unbridled and immediate freedom of the Logos-Christ, amid the mass of particular beings in the scriptural 'cosmos' and the cosmic 'bible', to make known his salvific presence and activity. In none of his exegetical works does Maximus actually carry out in full the ten-fold contemplation outlined in *Amb.Io.* 37. Instead, he frequently enters into one or more of the ten modes (place, time, (p. 259) genus, etc.), explores their spiritual significances or *logoi*, and works to decipher the latent configurations of meaning within and among various biblical texts (Blowers 2002: 414–20). The Bible's sacred history is a drama of many characters, whether humans or other creatures (including inanimate ones), whose positions and actions are not, in their effects, limited to the ancient historical contexts, but hold mimetic power far beyond their native setting. Each one is a prospective exemplar, actively or

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passively, beneficially or perversely, for other creatures in the continuum of salvation history (*Amb.Io*. 37, PG 91. 1296A–B).[7] Simply put, the Areopagite's vertical hierarchy of cosmic mimesis, in which lower beings imitate higher ones in the outflow of divine enlightenment, is turned sideways by Maximus. Older beings set examples for younger ones in the diachronic continuum, but there remains also a *synchronic* dimension, since, in the 'thickness' of the biblical script as a whole, a single figure can yield multiple examples, and various scriptural figures can interplay to provide new instruction and illumination.

Only a few examples must suffice here. In *Q.Thal*. 64, Maximus composes a concise commentary on the biblical story of Jonah the prophet, and opens his analysis by observing that:

> None of the persons, places, times, or other things recorded in Scripture—animate and inanimate, sensible and intelligible—has its concurrent literal or spiritual meanings rendered always according to the same interpretive mode. Whoever, therefore, is infallibly trained in the divine knowledge of Holy Scripture must, for the diversity of what appears and is communicated therein, interpret each recorded thing in a different way and assign it, according to its place or time, the fitting spiritual meaning. For the name of each thing signified in Scripture lends itself to many meanings by the potency of the Hebrew language.
>
> (Laga–Steel 1990: 187; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 145–6)

In what follows, Maximus reflects on the *person* (πρόσωπον) of Jonah and the different possible etymological renderings of his Hebrew name: 'repose of God', 'gift of God', 'healing from God', 'God's grace to them', 'labour of God', 'dove', 'flight from beauty', and 'their toil'.[8] From these Maximus deduces that Jonah is a τύπος of Adam, of our shared human nature, of Christ, of prophetic grace, and of Jews in the toil of their jealousy of the graces of God. Maximus further identifies the different *places* in Jonah's career and extracts a virtual spiritual topography from the text that underwrites the prophet's figurative significance. In the course of the narrative, Jonah variously appears in Joppa, in the sea, in the whale, and under the shade of the gourd plant in Nineveh. By allegorically combining the eight different valid etymologies of 'Jonah' with the five *typoi* he embodies and with the different venues of the prophet's experience, Maximus in turn opens up multiple horizons of interpreting the story (Laga 1985). **(p. 260)**

> For example, Jonah is a figure of Adam and of our shared human nature when he flees Joppa to the sea, for which reason he is called 'flight from beauty' by the intrinsic force of his name. Joppa in itself clearly constitutes a figure of paradise, which truly is, and is rightly called, a 'vision of joy', a 'powerful joy', and a 'wondrous beauty' because of the abundance of incorruptibility within it. Whatever this paradise may have been, it was planted by the hand of God. For, as Scripture says, 'The Lord planted a garden in Eden, and placed there the man whom he had formed' (Gen 2: 8). He also planted certain trees in the garden that were either visible to the eye or else intelligible, and the tree of life, which was in the middle of the garden. Adam was commanded to eat of all the trees but perhaps did not touch them [in a sensible way]. For the text says, 'you may eat from every tree in the garden' (Gen 2: 16). Now Joppa can also signify virtue and knowledge, and the wisdom based on both: virtue when it is translated 'wondrous beauty'; knowledge when translated 'vision of joy'; and wisdom when it means 'powerful joy' since, when man is perfected in wisdom, he acquires unspeakable joy, a potent joy able to maintain him with a godly and divine sustenance. For according to Scripture, 'wisdom is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her, and she is a secure help for those who rely on her, as on the Lord' (Prov 3: 18).
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 189; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 146–7)

In this passage we can see how, from the diachronic sequence of events in Jonah's story, Maximus has extrapolated, synchronically, using the concurrence or *con*-figuration of an array of elements discerned in the text, a larger narrative portraying the economy of salvation. Later in his exposition he expands at length on Jonah as a figure of Christ:

> … who for our sake became like us, through flesh animated by a rational soul, save only without sin (Heb 4: 15), he marks out in advance the mystery of the Incarnation and the sufferings that accompanied it. He signifies the descent from heaven into this world in his transit from *Joppa* into the *sea*. His being swallowed by the whale and his impassible submission for three days and three nights indicates the mystery of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (cf. Matt 12: 40). Thus his name can fittingly be translated 'repose

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> of God', 'healing from God', and 'God's grace to them'. And perhaps he is rightly called 'labour of God' because of his voluntary suffering. For by his own actions the prophet mystically prefigures the authentic 'repose' of those who have laboured amid physical pain, the 'healing' of those who have been broken, the 'grace' of the forgiveness of sins—our God Jesus Christ. For our Lord and God … became a [human being] and entered into the sea of life like ours, insofar as he descended from the heaven of Joppa (translated 'contemplation of joy') into the ocean of this life. As Scripture says, he is the one 'who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame' (Heb 12: 2). He even descended willingly into the heart of the *earth*, where the Evil One had swallowed us through death, and drew us up by his resurrection, leading our whole captive nature up to heaven. Truly he is our 'repose', our 'healing', our 'grace': our repose since, with his timely human life, he freed the law from the situation of its carnal bondage; our healing since, by his resurrection, he cured us of the destruction wrought by death and corruption; our grace insofar as he distributes adoption in the Spirit by our God and Father through faith, and the (p. 261) grace of deification to each who is worthy. For it was necessary, necessary in truth, for him to become the light unto that *earth* (cf. John 1: 9), to be the power of our God and Father (cf. 1 Cor 1: 18) in the earth with its abiding darkness and *eternal bars*, so that, having dispelled the darkness of ignorance—being the Father's light, as it were—and having crushed the bars of evil insofar as he is the concrete power of God, he might wondrously liberate human nature from its bondage to these things under the Evil One, and endow it with the inextinguishable light of true knowledge and the indefatigable power of the virtues.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 195–7; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 149–50)

The dignity (ἀξία) and occupation (ἐπιτήδευμα) of particular persons in the Bible also receive serious attention from Maximus. An excellent case in point, very much in line with Origen, is his analysis of famous kings in the Hebrew scriptures who might be virtuous, malevolent, or—like Nebuchadnezzar—a combination of both in their native narratives. Like Evagrius (see Géhin 1987: 18–19), Maximus contemplates them on the basis of whether they appear 'laudably' (ἐπαινετῶς) or 'culpably' (ψεκτῶς) in their original context (*Amb.Io.* 37, PG 91. 1296B), and by other signals in their prosopography:

> The gnostic will come to know the significance of all the rest of the kings [in 3 Kgs, LXX] through the interpretation of their names, or by their geographic location, or by the common tradition which prevails in those lands, or by the particular customs that are pursued among them, or by the sort of antipathy each has towards Israel … For not all the [foreign] kings are always interpreted in the same way or according to one meaning; rather, they are interpreted with a view to their underlying utility (χρείαν) and prophetic potential (τῆς προφητείας τὴν δύναμιν). Indeed, Scripture was able to render the Pharaoh as [a figure of] the Devil when he sought to destroy Israel, but then again as [a figure of] the law of nature when he served Israel according to the dispensation of Joseph … Likewise the King of Tyre is intended to represent the Devil when he waged war on Israel through Sisera, but elsewhere signifies the law of nature when he made peace with David and contributed so much to Solomon for the building of the temple. Each of the kings recounted in Scripture is interpreted in many different meanings according to his underlying prophetic potential.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 26, Laga–Steel 1980: 179–81; Blowers 2002: 418–19)

The fruit of the 'contemplative research' (τῆς θεωρίας ἐξέτασις) undertaken through Maximus' first five of the ten modes of exploring scriptural texts is advancement in 'practical, natural, and theological philosophy' (*Amb.Io.* 37, PG 91. 1296A–B). Maximus' exegesis of biblical figures as models of virtue and vice (practical philosophy) is pervasive (see Stead 1996–97), and situated within a longstanding patristic exegetical tradition of expounding on moral *exempla*. But the 'world' mirrored in scripture also illumines the landscape of metaphysics (natural philosophy), including the essence (οὐσία), potency (δύναμις), and activity (ἐνέργεια) of individual created beings, especially rational creatures.[9] Given the (p. 262) mutual insinuation of the 'books' of scripture and creation, the Bible symbolically sheds light on the ontological predisposition and teleological movement of creatures such as Maximus describes in depth in *Amb.Io*. 7 (PG 91. 1072A–1085A). Neither practical nor the natural philosophy, however, is an end in itself, since the interpreter of scripture is pressed on to 'theological philosophy', the graced wisdom concerning the Trinity which 'natural' knowledge aids but cannot grant.

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In proposing to reduce the insights of the three-fold philosophy (φιλοσοφία) to 'present' and 'future', or 'type' and 'truth', Maximus indicates the teleological or eschatological orientation of all interpretation and the location of the interpreter within a framework of prophecy and fulfilment. As Irénée-Henri Dalmais has observed, 'in preferring the dialectic of preparation-realization to the antithesis of figure-reality, [Maximus] gives the double advantage of binding more strongly the unity of his synthesis by introducing therein the dimension of duration, and of reserving a place for the future within the New Covenant' (1982: 21). Meanwhile, the interpreter stands within that expansive, suspenseful period in which the complex biblical prefiguration of the new creation is still coming to fulfilment in the wake of Christ's Incarnation. Eschatologically speaking, this fulfilment is the work of the immanent and transcendent Logos who comprehends the totality of the continuum of revelation and interpretation:

> Insofar as it is possible, albeit it in a transcendent and sublime way, for humanity, in the present age, attaining to the ultimate measure of virtue and knowledge and wisdom, to reach the knowledge of divine things, it is possible through a future and an image of archetypes. For actually a figure is the whole truth that we judge to be present now, and an image is also a shadow of the superior Logos. For seeing that the Logos who has created the universe both exists and manifests himself in the universe according to the relation of the present to the future, he is understood as figure and truth; and inasmuch as he transcends present and future, he is understood as transcending figure and truth, by containing nothing that could be considered contrary. But truth has a contrary: falsehood. So then beyond truth the Logos gather all things unto himself, since he is man and God, and indeed also beyond all humanity and divinity.
>
> (*Amb.Io*. 37, PG 91. 1296B–D; Blowers 2002: 424)

The Form and Practice of Exegesis in Maximus' Exegetical Works

With the exception of his *Commentary on Psalm* 59, Maximus' principal exegetical works, the *Questions and Responses for Thalassius, Questions and Responses for Theopemptus,* and *Questions and Doubts* fall within a well-established patristic genre of question-and-response literature and within the even broader tradition of philosophical and theological *aporiae*, or 'difficulties' (Blowers 1991: 29–73). Beneath this (p. 263) literary genre lay the conviction—going back to Origen, Augustine, and other patristic commentators—that scripture is intrinsically and intentionally enigmatic, a puzzle to be solved, a labyrinth to be negotiated with interpretative diligence in pursuit of the elusive Word.

Even if Maximus is usually answering queries posed to him by others, his exegesis assumes that all interpretation is exploratory and heuristic, a 'research' (ἐξέτασις) with no expectation of attaining a final or definitive interpretation since, in keeping with the incomprehensibility of the Logos himself, the spiritual meaning of scripture is uncircumscribable (ἀπερίγραφος) (*Q.Thal*. 50, Laga–Steel 1980: 379).

The *Questions and Responses for Thalassius*, by far his longest exegetical work, consists of sixty-five questions posed to Maximus by his monastic friend, the Libyan abbot Thalassius, only one of which is a non-exegetical query. There are a number of classic *aporiae* reintroduced in the work, such as why Genesis 1: 31–2: 2 has God completing his creative labour in six days while Jesus says in John 5: 17 that 'my Father is working still' (*Q.Thal*. 2, Laga–Steel 1980: 51); or how it was that the Gospel was preached to the dead (1 Pet. 4: 6) (*Q.Thal*. 7, Laga–Steel 1980: 73); or why Paul went up to Jerusalem even after being forewarned 'through the Spirit' not to go there (Acts 21: 4) (*Q.Thal*. 29, Laga–Steel 1980: 211). Many of the *aporiae* broach tensions and discrepancies in and among scriptural texts. For instance, like Origen and even like modern commentators vexed by Paul's variable nuances of the term 'law' (νόμος), Maximus deals with Thalassius' question of why 'the doers of the law will be justified' (Rom. 2: 13) and yet 'you who are justified by the law have fallen away from grace' (Gal. 5: 4) (*Q.Thal*. 18, Laga–Steel 1980: 117). There are also scriptural *aporiae* of particular relevance for the monks' aspiration to holiness, such as Thalassius' query about how Paul's sanctified body was such that garments were brought from it and successfully used to heal the sick (Acts 19: 12) (*Q.Thal*. 37, Laga–Steel 1980: 247). Numerous other *aporiae* seem merely to introduce obscure passages from the Bible that have no obvious or immediate application to the ascetical life and that beg for figurative or allegorical interpretation. The *Questions and Doubts* (Declerck 1982) and *Questions and Responses for Theopemptus* (Roosen–Van Deun 2003) are of much the same character and scope. The *Questions and Doubts*, however, treats of several non-exegetical questions, including some which, in the spirit of Maximus' *Ambigua*, look to clarify passages from earlier patristic authorities. But overall, like the *Questions and*

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Responses for Thalassius, these works demonstrate how Maximus considers the interpretation and resolution of scriptural *aporiae* to be a decisive mode of spiritual pedagogy. Indeed, in these works we see the cultivation of a Byzantine monastic *lectio divina* aimed at rendering all scripture, especially its troublesome and stymieing passages, edifying for the moral and spiritual life. In keeping with Origen's notion of useful scandals (σκάνδαλα) in the biblical text, Maximus acknowledges deliberate difficulties that arouse the interpreter from laziness. On one obscurity in the Old Testament, for example, he writes,

> I have a difficulty in wondering how it was possible for Uzziah, who was historically the King of Judah, to have vinedressers on Mt Carmel (2 Chr 26: 10), which **(p. 264)** was located not in the kingdom of Judah but in the kingdom of Israel. Indeed, the capital city of the kingdom of Israel was built on Carmel. It seems, however, that the Word has mixed what is untrue into the historical narrative in order to arouse our dull mind in quest of the truth.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 48, Laga–Steel 1980: 339)

In the same vein, Maximus also embraces Ps-Dionysius' notion of 'dissimilar similarities' (ἀνόμοιοι ὁμοιότητες) in the biblical text (*Div.nom*. 2. 1–5, Suchla 1990: 122–9), its use of vulgar or abrasive language for describing divine realities. It befits the economy of revelation for God to be depicted 'polymorphously' (πολυτρόπως): 'We find that Holy Scripture portrays God in relation to the underlying condition (διάθεσις) of those under his providence. For this reason, even though he is none of these things, Scripture calls God a lion, bear, leopard, panther, human, cow, sheep, sun, stars, fire, wind, and scores of other things, each of which has a certain force specific to the dispositions of the audiences of the texts' (*Q.Thal.* 28, Laga–Steel 1980: 203). The offensiveness is redemptive because, ironically, it cajoles the interpreter towards a deeper, latent meaning. This extreme divine accommodation in human language—reflecting the depth of the Logos' 'incarnation' in scripture—demands the most rigorous reciprocation, a perpetual, deifying conversion to the hidden power of biblical revelation. God has 'mingled Godself invisibly with all the [scriptural] figures that were given to ancient people, thereby bringing about the ascent (ἀνάβασις) of those whom God is educating' (*Q.Thal.* 31, Laga–Steel 1980: 223).

Exegesis in this case is the negotiation of a difficult textual terrain that nonetheless bears a providentially salutary order (εὐταξία) (*Q.Thal*. 10, Laga–Steel 1980: 83). As in *Amb.Io*. 71, where Maximus portrays the Logos as 'playing' with or beneficially teasing his creatures by his manifold 'incarnational' incursions into the world in order to instruct them using sensible things (PG 91. 1408C–1416D; see also Blowers 2012; Cooper 2005: 48–50), the exegete is put in the position of playing along, as it were, with the Logos' manoeuvres behind the scriptural text in an interpretative 'dance' of sorts (Blowers 2013). The Transfiguration retains hermeneutical significance for Maximus precisely because, in symbolizing the 'books' of scripture and creation, it normatively conveys the dialectic of disclosure and concealment intrinsic to divine revelation: the Logos who 'in appearing conceals himself, and in hiding manifests himself' (*Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1129B–C). Exegesis becomes, then, a game of hide-and-seek. There are hints of the salient image, from the works of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa on the Song of Songs, of the Logos as a paramour graciously and gracefully seducing the soul's deep desires as well as intellect, and drawing it on to spiritual maturity (cf. *QD* 132, Declerck 1982: 96). Even the scriptural prophets/writers had to 'seek out and investigate' the mysteries of salvation and deification (1 Pet. 1: 10–11) as they connected the heuristic exegesis of those mysteries with the cultivation of virtue and of contemplative and theological knowledge (*Q.Thal.* 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 46–67). Such knowledge was nonetheless unthinkable apart from 'burning desire' (ζεούση ἔφεσις), the *affective* as well as epistemic motion of the mind (*Q.Thal*. 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 65).

(p. 265) As an engagement with the polymorphous Logos, the interpretative dance means creatively facing the challenge of the overwhelming polyvalence of the biblical texts. Maximus does not, any more than Origen, adhere rigorously to a catalogue of senses, literal and non-literal, in the sorting out of different legitimate meanings of a biblical text, though he does occasionally refer to 'tropological' (moral), 'allegorical', or 'anagogical' senses (Blowers 1991: 185–92, 197–203). Instead, like Origen, he proceeds with a general distinction between 'literal' and 'spiritual' interpretation. The literal sense, he believes, can lead to superficial readings and dead literalism; and Maximus shares Origen's concern for Judaizing subservience to the letter (*Q.Thal.* 53, Laga–Steel 1980: 433). But there is also, says Maximus, the 'power of the literal meaning in the Spirit, which is always abounding into its fullness' (*Q.Thal.* 17, Laga–Steel 1980: 111). This is the 'historical' meaning (ἱστορία) that perpetually unfolds a *sensus plenior* or 'fuller sense', a boundless eschatological horizon of prophetic or 'spiritual' significances.

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Once more like Origen (*Princ*. 4. 2. 6, Crouzel–Simonetti 1980: 324–6), Maximus esteems Paul's axiom in 1 Cor. 10: 11 about ancient biblical events having happened 'figuratively' (τυπικῶς) to God's ancient people for our benefit, 'and in truth they are fulfilled now in us' (*LA*, Van Deun 2000a: 99). As in Origen too, 'typology' and 'allegory' are not distinctive interpretative projects but explore what is minutely and broadly figurative in scripture (see Martens 2008), and aspire to a vision of things that ties together past, present, and transcending future. All scripture is in some sense 'prophetic', and so too its 'fulfilment' or outworking (ἔκβασις) is ongoing and dynamic in the transition between history and eternity. The 'ages' (Eph. 2: 7; 1 Cor. 10: 11) of divine 'Incarnation' (i.e. God's involvement in sacred history building up to its culmination in Jesus Christ) and the 'ages' of human deification (as the future fruit of the Creator's labour) are not purely successive but eschatologically simultaneous (*Q.Thal*. 22, Laga–Steel 1980: 137–43; Blowers 1997). The biblical interpreter, situated existentially 'between' the ages, must therefore coordinate between scripture's prophetic potency and its fresh fulfilments in the theatres of human nature, the church, and the cosmos.

Much of Maximus' exegesis in the *Questions and Responses to Thalassius* and his other exegetical writings focusses on the fulfilment of scripture in the interior life of the human soul and the soul–body relation. Frequently he aligns christological and anthropological typology/allegory, thus integrating the incarnational and redemptive achievement of Christ with believers' ascetical and spiritual quests in the present. Maximus' *Commentary on Psalm 59* (LXX) is a model in this regard. Psalm 59 is not explicitly problematic for Maximus, though he doubtless knows of Basil of Caesarea's quandary about why this psalm's title extols the military successes of David's army when the body of the psalm erupts in sobering 'lamentations and dirges' (Basil Caes., *Homiliae super psalmos* 59, PG 29. 461B). Maximus resolves the discrepancy first by treating the title as a prefiguration of the 'final' victories of Christ. Like other patristic commentators, he expounds at length on the titles of the psalms, and especially those inscribed 'unto the end' (εἰς τὸ τέλος), which purportedly hinted of an eschatological fulfilment. In the lamentations, (p. 266) in turn, we have Christ speaking prosopologically as the hidden voice in the text, identifying in the present ascetical struggles of mortification and repentance of sinners (*In ps. LIX*, Van Deun 1991: 3–22; also Blowers 2014). But the two parts of the psalm, title and body, are inextricably interwoven in the overarching Christocentric narrative of the soul's spiritual progress. We have already noted a similar pattern in *Q.Thal.* 64, where Maximus juxtaposes the figures of Jonah as Christ and Jonah as human nature. In *QD* 21 we see yet another variation, as he reflects on the eschatological mystery of resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15: 23–4 ('Christ is the first-fruits; then at his coming those who belong to Christ; then there is the end'). Christ is the first-fruits; those who have faith in him are the ones who belong to him; and the end is the salvation of all the Gentiles. But it is also true, avers Maximus, that 'Christ the first-fruits' is the *faith* itself in him; 'those who belong to Christ' are the works derived from that faith; and the 'end' is the transcending of all things through knowledge (διὰ γνώσεως) of God (Declerck 1982: 19–20; cf. also *Q.Thal*. 54, Laga–Steel 1980: 465). By this reading, the subjective horizon of the faithful is enfolded into the larger objective achievement of Christ in sacred history (see Prassas 2010: 35–6).

Returning specifically to the issue of the polyvalence of scripture, the interpreter can have diverse intuitions (ἐπινοίαι) or readings (ἐπιβολαί), which may all be legitimate.[10] Maximus does not, however, routinely rank these different meanings in terms of their respective appeal for novices, intermediates, and the advanced (gnostics). When rarely he posits a meaning allegedly 'more gnostic' (γνωστικώτερον) or 'more sublime' (ὑψηλοτέρως),[11] it does not necessarily pertain to θεολογία but may well relate to the *oikonomia* of the Incarnation and its implications for the life of faith. For Maximus, the configuration of diverse meanings—often introduced in the course of his exegesis by terms such as 'nay …' (ἢ πάλιν), 'or rather …' (ἢ μᾶλλον), 'perhaps …' (ἢ τάχα; τυχόν), 'by another reading …' (κατ' ἄλλον τρόπον) (see Blowers 1991: 191, 232–3 nn.45–50)—reflects his belief that the Logos is not just a transcendent Mediator of revelation, but immanent and active within the sacred witness of scripture, offering manifold insights into its richness. We may draw here on Maximus' wheel-like image of Christ at the centre (κέντρον) of the universe of beings, with their causal principles (ἀρχαί) being like radii going forth and returning to that centre (*Myst*. 1, Boudignon 2011: 13; see also Tollefsen 2008: 50, 68–9, 80). By analogy, the λόγοι of scripture are the radii of the Logos, at once emanating from him and tributary to him.

Though Christ, the Logos guarantees scripture's integrity amid its diversity; the interpreter's human perspective nevertheless remains limited, and dependent on grace, in the interpretative dance. Maximus is candid about the speculative character of much interpretation. Hovering over the interpreter's expositions of sacred revelation is the awareness that there are mysteries too deep for overt explanation, inducing Maximus on a few occasions to 'honour with silence' a truth too sublime for words, such as the meaning of the 'tree of the knowledge of good and

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evil' (Gen. 2: 9) and its ultimate relation (p. 267) to the 'tree of life' (*Q.Thal*. intro. and 43, Laga–Steel 1980: 37, 293; see also Daley 1982). Such silence is really a reverence more for the ineffable Logos immanent in scripture than for the textual conundrum itself (*Amb.Th*. 5, PG 91. 1057A). Sometimes, moreover, it is expedient to undertake what Maximus, learning from Gregory of Nyssa (*In Cant*. 1, Langerbeck 1960: 37), calls 'conjecture' (στοχασμός), a pious and appropriately cautious guessing at the meaning of a text:

> It is not improper, in view of that faculty in us that naturally longs for the knowledge of divine things, to undertake a conjecture about higher truths, as long as two good things from the conjecture exhibit themselves to those who possess genuine reverence for divine realities. For the one who approaches the divine realities conjecturally either attains to intelligible truth and, rejoicing, offers the 'sacrifice of praise' (Ps 49(50): 14, 23, LXX; Heb 13: 15), thanksgiving, to the Giver of the knowledge of what was sought, or he finds that the meaning of the scriptures eludes him, and reveres the divine truths all the more by learning that the acquisition of them exceeds his own ability.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 55, Laga–Steel 1980: 481; Blowers 1991: 187)

Maximus does not habitually show the profound apophaticism with respect to the nature of biblical language that we find in Gregory of Nyssa and even Ps-Dionysius (*Theol.myst.* 1. 3, Heil–Ritter 1991: 143–4). Exegesis is less a plunge into the abyss of biblical language than a search for solid connections between λόγοι and Logos in the 'cosmos' of scripture, though the mystical dimension of exegesis is never diminished. 'Good and pious speculations' (καλὰ καὶ εὐσεβῆ θεωρήματα) are inevitable (*Q.Thal*. 63, Laga–Steel 1990: 165). Maximus nonetheless accepts, especially from Ps-Dionysius, that a certain reverent boldness or even 'daring' (τολμᾶν) is in order in the encounter with divine revelation and the positing of individual interpretations.[12] Most important is the attitude of worship, the primary disposition of the interpreter (*Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1128A–B; see also Cooper 2001).

Endeavouring, in the meantime, to identify the many nuances of scripture conducive to ascetical and contemplative devotion, Maximus deploys the exegetical science of the Alexandrian heritage to its fullest. In this respect he is hardly an innovator. As noted above in his commentary on Jonah in *Q.Thal.* 64, he generously uses etymology (onomastics), a 'spiritual research through the interpretation of names' (*Q.Thal*. 50, Laga–Steel 1980: 353; also Schoors 1994; Blowers 1991: 203–11), entailing a process of deconstructing Hebrew proper or place names and reconstructing them in the Greek, with the expectation of latent meanings (*Q.Thal*. 54, Laga–Steel 1980: 443). Maximus also abundantly employs arithmology, the investigation of hidden moral or spiritual meanings in numbers that appear in Old and New Testament narratives alike. The numbers are hardly random but are inspired signals for transposing sacred history into the (p. 268) Christian's present experience. Commenting on the 185,000 Assyrians slain by the angel of the Lord in 4 Kgs 19: 35 (LXX), he parses the '185' as follows:

> The number that contains six, when compounded by ten, makes sixty. Sixty, when tripled by the three universal faculties of the soul [i.e. reason, desire, and temper], added with five, for the innate senses, makes the number 185, and indicates that habit of the natural faculties that is productive of evil in relation to the sense, since this number appears in a culpable light (ψεκτῶς) in this passage of Holy Scripture. The mind that relies by prayer more on its own power, and which leads an entirely upright life, and which considers God the cause of every victory over the demons, kills this number.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 49, Laga–Steel 1980: 365; Blowers 1991: 212)

Still another mode of this spiritual-pedagogical exegesis, thoroughly reminiscent of Origen, is a keen attention to fine points of syntax, language (homonymy, metaphor, tropes, etc.), and the whole grammatical constitution of biblical texts (Blowers 1991: 219–28). Even such minutiae as intensive prefixes on verbs (e.g. ἐκζητεῖν as distinct from ζητεῖν), noticed as well by Origen (*Frag. in Ps*. 118, Harl 1972: 374–6) and Didymus (*Frag. in Ps*. 118, Harl 1972: 194, 3b) can generate substantial interest and carry over into the intensification of spiritual progress (*Q.Thal.* 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 59). All these exegetical practices belong to the uplifting instruction, or 'anagogy' (ἀναγωγή) of the Holy Spirit, and rest on the conviction that scripture itself is a deep and complex grammar of the soul's quest for intimacy with Christ the Logos.

Dogmatic Interpretation of Scripture in Maximus

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The theological interpretation of scripture is for Maximus, like most other patristic authors, a larger process than the exegesis of individual texts. For one thing, it entails the tactical 'use' of scripture, often by judiciously developing constellations of texts that serve to substantiate, clarify, or defend Christian dogmas. In *Amb.Io.* 7, for instance, where Maximus famously treats of the mysteries of human embodiment and of the beginning and end of creaturely movement, he constructs a patchwork of biblical testimonia proving, against the Origenists, that no creature ever fell from a primordial state of 'rest' (στάσις), but that God, as first and final Cause of the universe, summons all creatures to an unprecedented repose in him, the teleological fulfilment of their desire and motion as free beings (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1069A–1073D):

> 'For you have not as yet come to the rest and the inheritance that the Lord your God gives you' (Deut. 12: 9).
>
> 'Crying out, I will be satisfied when your glory appears' (Ps. 16: 15, LXX).
>
> (p. 269) '… that if possible I may attain the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own' (Phil. 3: 11–12).
>
> 'For whoever enters into God's rest also ceases from his labours as God did from his' (Heb. 4: 10).
>
> 'Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest' (Matt. 11: 28).

Clearly this scriptural montage, in which Maximus strategically cites Christ's own dictum last, as an authoritative culmination, serves well the polemic against Origenist cosmology and eschatology. But there is more going on here than polemics or dogmatics. The quoted scriptural texts also involve the believer in the existential struggle to attain rest. Over and beyond the metaphysics of divine causality and creaturely fulfilment, the Bible's 'realized eschatology' portrays believers in a purposive tension between what God has *already* instituted for creation and the future grace, or rest, *not yet* fully accessible to them, and in so doing, gives incentive to creatures' striving for perfection. For Maximus, as a rule, the dogmatic and devotional dimensions of interpretation are not to be segregated but integrated.

His *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* (*Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 27–73) constitutes a carefully crafted insinuation of dogmatic and devotional interpretation. Because the prayer, rising from the context of the Incarnation, articulates Christ's own words to the Father, Maximus treats it as a virtual sacrament, communicating in sacred shorthand the 'seven mysteries' of salvation. The resultant commentary is less an exegesis as such than an exposition of the prayer as a 'vow' to the triune God—the 'Our Father' signalling θεολογία—and a litany rehearsing the manifold and deifying benefits of incarnational grace. Dogmatic insights into the Incarnation, divine suffering, and the οἰκονομία of salvation are interlaced with admonitions about the Christian's moral and spiritual growth.

The best evidence of dogmatic exegesis as a form in its own right of theological interpretation of scripture in Maximus belongs to the works, especially the *Opuscula*, from the period of his deep involvement in the monothelite controversy (640s until his death). There is no more compelling example than his extensive exegesis of the narrative of Christ's agony and prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26: 39–42 and par.), which proved decisive to his defence of the two wills of Christ in this sustained doctrinal crisis. This pericope had a long history of interpretation among patristic theologians, and brought to a head the issue of the nature of Jesus' volition as Son of God in the flesh. Maximus visits it in a number of his anti-monothelite writings, but an especially perspicacious exposition is *Opusc.* 6 (PG 91. 65A–68D, Blowers–Wilken 2003: 173–6; see also Kattan 2003: 258–66). Here he faces the dilemma that monothelites had already co-opted this text as proof that Christ had a single, divine will because his prayer effectively precluded the possibility of an independent human will opposing the divine. Complicating things was the fact that no less an authority than Gregory Nazianzen had raised the question that, if Christ truly had a human will like ours, it had to have been (p. 270) capable of resisting God's will. Gregory had interpreted the Gethsemane prayer in the light of John 6: 38 ('For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me'), and suggested that Jesus prayed in the *trinitarian* register, indicating that the Son could never deviate from the will of the Father. Rather than refuting Nazianzen's reading, Maximus interprets the prayer in the *christological* register as an evidence of the Saviour handing over his human will to the will of God. The seeming 'resistance' of Jesus to the spectre of suffering indicates difference but not opposition between his human and divine wills.

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Maximus' interpretation here is best characterized as a theologically literal rendering of the text, comparable to what we often find later in the commentaries of Thomas Aquinas. There is no symbolism in it. The key is to read the Gethsemane prayer on the basis of the rule, propounded by Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers, that some things about Christ in the Gospels are to be read with respect to his divinity, and others his humanity. More precisely in this instance, however, the prayer must be understood as voiced by Christ's composite hypostasis, the person who is two natures, two energies, and two wills, divine and human. For Maximus, moreover, this 'literal' reading represents not his own private judgement or opinion, but a fruit of the mature reasoning of the church of the Fathers and councils.

Suggested Reading

Any examination of Maximus the Confessor's hermeneutics and exegesis in their context is well served by considering major studies of exegesis in the Alexandrian heritage (Harl 1958; Canévet 1983; Daley 1998; Lubac 2007; Martens 2008, 2012). Modern analysis of Maximus' interpretative theory and practice began in earnest with the work of Polycarp Sherwood (1958), who first explored Maximus' dependence on the Alexandrian-Origenian tradition, but also called for more intensive investigation, especially of the *Q.Thal.* Paul Blowers' monograph *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy* (1991) was the first expanded study of Maximus' hermeneutics, and is supplemented by the work of George Berthold (1987, 2004), Assaad Kattan (2003), and Despina Prassas (2010). Blowers has followed up his monograph with several other shorter studies of sundry themes in Maximus' hermeneutics and exegesis (see Blowers 1993, 1995, 1997, 2012, 2013, 2014). A number of secondary studies have dealt with Maximus' exegesis as a factor in specific aspects of his work, including his doctrine of authority (Pelikan 1973), his cosmology and anthropology (Cooper 2001 and 2005), his spiritual doctrine and asceticism (Völker 1965; Dalmais 1982; Laga 1985; Berthold 1987; Stead 1996–97; Cooper 2001, 2005; Argárate 2008; Blowers 2014), his exposition of the Divine Liturgy (Bornert 1970), and his trinitarian theology and Christology (Léthel 1979; Heinzer 1982; Bausenhart 1992).

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Notes:

([1]) *Schol. in Prov*. 291, Géhin 1987: 282, 284; Dysinger 2013; also Driscoll 2005: 86–7.

([2]) *Schol. in Ps*. 138. 16, PG 12. 1662; cf. *Schol. in Prov*. 22. 20; also Dysinger 2013; Driscoll 2005: 80–8.

([3]) Cf. Evagrius, *Schol. in Prov*. 2–3, 88, and 153, Géhin 1987: 90–2, 186–8, and 248–50; Evagrius, *Schol. in Eccl*. 15, Géhin 1993: 80–2; Maximus, *Th.oec*. 2. 16, PG 90. 1132B–C; *Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1121A, 1133D–1136A; *Q.Thal*. 53, 54, Laga–Steel 1980: 431, 457.

([4]) von Balthasar 2003: 291–314; Blowers 1991: 117–22; Kattan 2003: 126–47.

([5]) In the case of each of these five modes, Maximus considers a whole array of sub-categories.

([6]) *Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1085A; *Q.Thal*. 13, Laga–Steel 1980: 95; cf. Ps-Dionysius, *Div.nom*. 5. 8, Suchla 1990: 188.

([7]) Cf. Ps-Dionysius, *Hier.cael.* 3. 2, Heil–Ritter 1991: 17–19.

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([8]) On etymology, used by Origen, Jerome, and other patristic exegetes, as a factor in Maximus' own allegorical and anagogical interpretations of scripture, see Blowers 1991: 203–11.

([9]) *Amb.Io.* 37, PG 91. 1296A; see also Sherwood 1955b: 103–16; Tollefsen 2008: 115, 131, 179, 184, 189.

([10]) Cf. *Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1160D; *Q.Thal*. 3, Laga–Steel 1980: 55; *Q.Thal*. 63, Laga–Steel 1990: 159.

([11]) Cf. *Q.Thal.* 50, 54, Laga–Steel 1980: 391, 465; *Q.Thal.* 63, Laga–Steel 1990: 173.

([12]) *Amb.Io*. 71, PG 91. 1412A, B; cf. Ps-Dionysius, *Div.nom*. 4. 7, 4. 10, and 4. 19, Suchla 1990: 152, 155, 163.

Paul M. Blowers

Paul M. Blowers is Dean E. Walker Professor of Church History at Emmanuel Christian Seminary, Johnson City, Tennessee.

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Maximus the Confessor's Use of Literary Genres

Peter Van Deun

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Abstract and Keywords

It is interesting to examine how Byzantine authors labelled their own writings and to what extent they incorporated the concept of genre. This chapter will focus on Maximus the Confessor. We will concentrate on the technical vocabulary used in the titles of his works; these data will be confronted with the texts' actual contents and with the author's own statements on the nature of his works. Maximus used a large variety of literary formats, ranging from question-and-answers to letters, exegetical commentaries, dialogues, dogmatic and spiritual florilegia, compilations of theological and philosophical definitions, and 'chapters' (*kephalaia)*, or theological collections of small paragraphs or chapters that are grouped into larger units. The question of authenticity will also be raised and the resulting problems for categorizing several works.

Keywords: genre, questions-and-answers, exegetical commentaries, florilegia, definitions, dialogues, chapters

THE abundant literature on Maximus concentrates largely on the theology of the Confessor and pays less attention to his literary merits. This chapter attempts to fill this gap by examining the literary genres practised by Maximus in his monumental oeuvre.

Let me start with a preliminary remark. There is an ongoing general discussion of the precise definition of genre, and this continuing debate also affects the way in which one should classify the literature of the Greek Fathers and of Byzantine authors.[1] Some scholars speak about clearly distinguished literary genres, starting from theoretical definitions, mostly Aristotelian, and with a well-defined set of characteristics. Others reject this theoretical framework and admit more fluidity and flexibility into their identification of genre. Without involving ourselves in this difficult discussion, and looking instead specifically at the literary production of Maximus the Confessor, it seems to me that this second point of view is more useful, since the boundaries among the different so-called genres are sometimes rather fluid, and texts that might be said to belong to the same genre often do not constitute a homogeneous corpus. Let me now analyse the literary formats used by Maximus in his oeuvre, mindful that the authorship and chronology of many of his works are still debated.

Questions and Answers

I begin with the question-and-answer form (ἐρωταποκρίσεις), which Maximus used frequently to organize his thoughts. Over the past several years scholars have paid special attention to this literary form and made some of the texts available in critical (p. 275) editions.[2] Much research nonetheless remains to be done on the literary process of instruction by question-and-answer, a format that further developed the tradition of similar collections in classical antiquity.

Let me turn now to the highly sophisticated question-and-answer works Maximus produced. The context is always

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the same: while reading and studying the scriptures or texts of the church Fathers, someone came across problematic passages or problems (called ἄπορα, ἀπορίαι or ἀπορήματα) and presented these 'questions' (ἐρωτήσεις or πεύσεις) to Maximus to be solved, that is, to be answered (λύσεις or ἀποκρίσεις). Often the answers are sufficiently long to take the form of a small treatise. There are several indications of a monastic setting for these collections, and, according to Paul Blowers (1991, especially 28–36 and 52–73), Maximus' question-and-answer compilations fused two older traditions: the patristic exegetical literature that deals with difficult passages of scripture, on the one hand, and the spiritual tradition of monastic *erotapokriseis* (ἐρωταποκρίσεις), on the other.

The most famous Maximian collection of questions and answers is known as *Q.Thal.* (*CPG* 7688). In this monumental work, preserved in more than eighty complete or partial manuscript witnesses, Maximus explains sixty-five difficult Bible passages (technically called ἄπορα in the title), submitted to him by his friend Thalassius, the famous Libyan theologian and author himself of four ascetical chapter *centuriae* (*CPG* 7848). The original title of *Q.Thal.*seems to be: 'To the most holy Thalassius, priest and abbot, about different difficult passages of Holy Scripture'. It is interesting that this work is preceded by a preface introduced by the words: 'To the very holy servant of God, Lord Thalassius, priest and abbot, greetings from the humble monk Maximus', which gives an epistolographical flavour to the text. Some of the questions receive a concise answer, but for others we are dealing with real treatises, for example on the human struggle against the passions, on the salvific work of Christ, or on the existence of evil in the world, a topic that constitutes the principal theme of the long introduction preceding the work (Laga–Steel 1980: 16–45).

Another important Maximian work in this regard is *Interrogations and Questions and Answers and Extracts from Different Difficult Chapters,* according to the Greek title (*QD, CPG* 7689). In the complicated text transmission, four different recensions have been discovered, containing no fewer than 239 questions and answers. It is possible that the collection originally contained still other *erotapokriseis*.

A collection of modest size is the *Questions for Theopemptus* (*CPG* 7696), the original title of which was *To the Scholastikos Theopemptus who Asked the Meaning of the Passages 'The judge was a bad man'* [Luke 18: 6], *and 'If someone hits you on the right side of your face'* [Matt. 5: 39], *and 'Do not hold me, because I have not yet gone up to my Father'* [John 20: 17]. This text contains the explanation of some difficult biblical passages.

(p. 276) The short *Questions for Theodore the Byzantine Deacon with the Answers of Maximus (Theodori Byzantini diaconi quaestiones cum Maximi solutionibus)* (*CPG* 7697 [19]) elaborates on two questions presented to Maximus by the monothelite deacon Theodore. Marinus of Cyprus, one of Maximus' influential friends, was the addressee of this text.

Finally, it is no surprise that similar question-and-answer collections have circulated under the name of Maximus. This is, for example, the case for a small collection of neo-Chalcedonian flavour, dealing with the tritheism controversy (Van Deun 2001).

Closely related to the question-and-answer format is the famous *Ascetical Text by Question and Answer* (*LA, CPG* 7692), a highly stylized monastic dialogue between an experienced old man (γέρων) and a young monk (apparently a novice) that discusses, in questions and answers, the part played by the Incarnation of Christ in the ascetic life and the salvation of mankind. This is an excellent imitation of the old genre of the desert conferences and *Sayings of the Fathers* (*Apophthegmata patrum*). This characterization applies especially to the first half of the text, while the second part departs from the vivid dialogue setting and ends in a kind of monologue by the elderly sage.

Ambigua

Closely related to all the preceding texts are the three collections of 'difficult passages' (*ambigua* or ἄπορα), which Maximus himself or one of his close collaborators and friends seems to have gathered into one 'edition': at least, *Ambigua Addressed to John* and *Ambigua Addressed to Thomas* are often found together in the manuscripts (Janssens 2003). In *Opusc.* 1 we encounter the following statement clearly referring to a passage from the second *Ambiguum* of *Amb.Io.* (PG 91. 1076C10–13): 'Concerning the sole energy we dealt with in the seventh chapter of the *Difficult Passages from Gregory the Great*' (PG 91. 33A8–10).

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Indeed, after the five chapters of *Ambigua to Thomas*, the second *Ambiguum* of *Amb.Io.* constitutes the seventh chapter of a combined edition (ἐν τῷ ἑβδόμῳ κεφαλαίῳ τῶν ἀπόρων), which probably received the general title, *Concerning the Difficult Passages of Saints Dionysius and Gregory*, a title that is preserved only at the head of the *Ambigua to Thomas.* Nonetheless, there cannot be any doubt that we are dealing with three different collections of *Ambigua*, a fact that is still often ignored, even in recent publications. Let me present them now in some detail.

1. The earliest and longest collection is the *Ambigua Addressed to John* (*CPG* 7705 [2]). In the manuscript tradition this work does not have a real title of its own, as we have seen, but the addressee is mentioned explicitly: 'To John, the archbishop of Cyzicus'. John of Cyzicus asked his friend Maximus to write down in detail the discussion they both had about sixty-six difficult passages of Gregory (p. 277) of Nazianzus. *Amb.Io.* are preceded by an epistolary preface—as in *Questions Addressed to Thalassius*—introduced by the words, 'To John the archbishop of Cyzicus, Maximus sends greetings in the Lord' (PG 91. 1061–1066).
2. The second collection of *Ambigua*, addressed to Thomas (*CPG* 7705 [1]), discusses five difficult passages that occur in some works of Gregory of Nazianzus and Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite. As has already been said, it is preceded by a general title, 'Concerning different difficult passages from Dionysius and Gregory', followed by the words 'To the blessed Thomas'. This Thomas, probably a monk in the monastery of Philippicus at Chrysopolis, could be the same person as is mentioned by Maximus in *Ep.* 40 (PG 91. 633D4–636A6). *Amb.Th.* is also introduced by an epistolary preface, starting with the words, 'To the blessed servant of God, spiritual Father and teacher, Lord Thomas, greetings from the humble and sinful Maximus, unworthy servant and disciple'.
3. To these two major collections of *ambigua* a very short collection should be added, known as *Ep. 2 ad Thomam* (*CPG* 7700),[3] where Maximus returns to three difficult passages of Gregory the Theologian, already dealt with in *Amb.Th.*. Unfortunately this work has not been preserved in its entirety. An epistolary preface of some forty lines starts with the words, 'To the blessed servant of God, spiritual Father and teacher, Lord Thomas, greetings from the humble and sinful Maximus, unworthy servant and disciple', exactly the words we have already seen in *Amb.Th.*

Biblical Commentaries

Maximus has also been famous for two biblical commentaries, known under the general name of ἑρμηνεῖαι. In this regard the most important work is without doubt *Or.dom.* (*CPG* 7691), of which the original title, preserved in the complete manuscript tradition, seems to have been *A Short Exegesis of the Lord's Prayer, to a Friend of Christ*. This commentary on the Lord's Prayer, often quoted by later authors, constitutes a sort of summary of Maximus' theology. The 'friend of Christ' to whom the work is addressed is unknown; only one Moscow manuscript *(Bibliotheca Synodalis 15* [*Vladimir 381*]), completed in 1023, gives the name of a certain Sergius *magistros*, who, unfortunately, is otherwise unknown.

Another important work is Maximus' short commentary on Psalm 59 (*CPG* 7690), preceded by the neutral title, *Exegesis of Psalm 59*, which can be found in all manuscript witnesses.

(p. 278) Computus Ecclesiasticus

Another exegetical work, of a technical nature, is *Computus ecclesiasticus*, called in Greek, *A Concise Commentary on Paschal Calculation* (*CPG* 7706). This computus is also introduced by an epistolary preface, starting with the words, 'To the illustrious patrician Lord Peter, greetings from the humble monk Maximus'. This Peter is well known as the *dux Numidiae* and exarch of Carthage.

I do not insist here on the scholia on the *Corpus Areopagiticum* (*CPG* 7708), formerly attributed as a whole to Maximus, only a small number of which can be attributed reliably to the Confessor.

Chapter Collections

To express his thoughts Maximus often turned to a type of Byzantine collection commonly known as 'chapters' (*capita* or κεφάλαια). This genre was popular in Greek patristic and Byzantine literature, ranging from the founding Father Evagrius of Pontus (d. 399) to the fall of Constantinople in 1453 (De Ridder and Levrie forthcoming; Géhin

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2013). Rooted in pagan philosophical literature (for example, Epictetus and the *Sententiae* of Sextus, with their respective Christian adaptations), this literary format especially developed into a form of monastic literature, with diverse usages: some of these chapters collect monastic texts for private meditation, with the salvation of the soul as a goal; some contain theologico-philosophical and ascetical definitions. These texts consist of small paragraphs or sayings (ranging from one to ten lines of text) that could easily be memorized and that are grouped into larger units; each chapter could be read and reflected upon separately.

Maximus compiled several famous *capita* collections, often with 100 units, which constitute *centuriae* or ἑκατοντάδες. This is the case with his *Chapters on Love* (*CPG* 7693), four *centuriae* that are preserved in more than 250 Greek manuscripts and that are mainly inspired by the *Practicus* and the *Gnostic Centuries* of Evagrius Ponticus. The 400 chapters are preceded by a prologue, informing us that both *Car.* and *LA* were written for a certain Elpidius: 'See, in addition to the discussion on the ascetic life, I have sent this one on charity to Your Reverence, Father Elpidius' (Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 48; trans. Sherwood 1955a: 136). The prologue to the *Chapters on Love* clearly points out how this collection should be read:

> Rather, do give your best attention to each chapter. Nor will they all, as I think, be readily understood by everybody; on the contrary, for a great number of them will require much scrutiny, even though they seem to be simply expressed. Perhaps something useful for the soul will come out of them; but this will wholly come from God's grace to the one who reads with a simple mind, with the fear of God, and with charity. But for the one who takes up this or any other work whatsoever, for the sake (p. 279) not of spiritual profit but of ferreting out phrases serving to revile the author, while setting up their own conceited self as wiser, there will never come any profit of any sort.
>
> (Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 48; trans. Sherwood 1955a: 136–7, modified)

Some lines before, Maximus also says: 'I have recapitulated many things in a few lines so that they may be seen at a glance, for ease in memorizing' (Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 48; trans. Sherwood 1955a: 136). The choice of a specific number of chapters was not made at random. The number 100 is chosen deliberately to avoid interpolation, and is known to symbolize spiritual perfection and completeness (e.g. *QD* 80, 104–8; cf. Van Deun 1992). As for the number 4, it symbolizes the four Gospels (e.g., *Car.,* prol., Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 48) or the four cardinal virtues (*QD* 41. 15; 46. 13–14).

Another important Maximian collection is *Th.oec.* (*CPG* 7694); the original title in Greek seems to be, *An Allegorical Work in Chapters on Theology and the Virtues*. Most of the 120 Greek manuscript witnesses offer 200 chapters, divided into two *centuriae*. In many of the Greek manuscripts, *Th.oec.* is followed by another chapter collection, containing only fifteen chapters: the *Fifteen Chapers* (*CPG* 7695) or, according to the original Greek title, *The Other Fifteen Chapters* (ἕτερα κεφάλαια ιε΄).

More than once Maximus limited himself to a collection of ten chapters, the number 10 being the symbol of the Ten Commandments, or of Jesus Christ himself.[4] Let me present some eloquent examples. Related to the two previous collections are the *Ten Chapters* (*CPG* 7694a), preserved in only ten manuscripts, which offer different titles: e.g., *Ten Chapters on Virtue and Vice,* or *On Virtue and Vice,* or *Other Chapters*. Another example is the anti-monothelite collection of the *Ten Chapters on the Double Will of the Lord* (*CPG* 7697 [25]).[5] The anti-monothelite collection of the *Ten Chapters on the Wills and Activities* (*CPG* 7707 [19]) also contains ten chapters. This interesting work was very popular (see the thirty-one manuscripts) and seems originally to have been entitled *Hypothetical Problematic Passages*.[6] Finally, another very popular ten-chapter collection, preserved in more than ninety manuscripts, is *On the Two Natures of Christ* (*CPG* 7697 [13]), which in the manuscripts exhibits a large number of titles, all with minor variants. The original title could have been, *Ten Chapters about the Two Natures of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God and Saviour*. Somewhere between 1440 and 1449 (Patrinélis 1966: 45), the Byzantine scholar Theodore Agallianus copied these ten chapters to form the starting-point for a polemic treatise against the Latins.[7] Thus the literary format of the original changed slightly in the fifteenth-century text.

(p. 280) Although at first sight these collections of chapters may appear to lack cohesion, some collections, such as *Chapters on Love*, tend to bear as a whole on particular topics, e.g., love (ἀγάπη), vices and virtues. The coherence of Maximus' collections is strengthened by the total number of the chapters (e.g. 100) and by the fact that he paid special attention to the beginning and the end of, for example, a century. The inner structure of Maximus' chapter compilations is confirmed by recurring words, expressions, images, motives, and themes, and

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also by linguistic features (e.g. similar grammatical constructions linking neighbouring chapters). Another structuring method, however—arranging the initials of the chapters as an acrostic, creating a word, a phrase, or a name on the basis of the first letters—is completely absent from the oeuvre of Maximus (for all these structuring elements see De Ridder 2013).

The fame that Maximus enjoyed as a chapter writer is responsible for the fact that other chapter collections also circulated under his name. I limit myself here to three works.

The five centuries of the *Various Chapters pertaining to Theology and the Divine Dispensation and concerning Virtue and Vice* (*CPG* 7715)—certainly not a genuine work of Maximus—were compiled probably between 1105 and 1116, with the 500 chapters taken from various texts of Maximus, especially his *Q.Thal.* with no fewer than 414 chapters.

The 100 *Gnostic Chapters* (*CPG* 7707 [11]) are preserved, partially or completely, in only six manuscripts. The original title of the work seems to be, *The Other 100 Chapters*; in two codices the indication ἑκατοντὰς τρίτη is added, as if this text is linked to the *Two Centuries on Theology and the Incarnation* (*Th.oec.*). Another manuscript has: 'This is the sixth century of the *Gnostic Chapters*', being the sixth following the five centuries of the *Various Chapters.* The authenticity of the *Gnostic Chapters* is under debate.

Finally, there are also the *Other Chapters*, originally called, so it seems, *Anthology of the Zealous Lovers of Wisdom*. In the eighty-four manuscript witnesses the number of chapters varies from 240 to 253. This collection is divided into four parts, each preceded by a distich. Although attributed to Maximus in some codices, the work seems to have been written by Elias Ecdicus around the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century. Unfortunately, there is a total lack of information on the life of Elias.

We have already had the opportunity to point to the epistolary prefaces that introduce several Maximian works, and his predilection for epistolary form becomes even more obvious in the collection of forty-five letters transmitted under his name (*CPG* 7699). These are addressed to his friends and to different influential persons in the church and the imperial administration. Some of these letters are devoted to specific topics and constitute genuine short treatises. More than ten of the forty-five letters bear a title. To this corpus of forty-five letters one has to add seven others that have not been edited or are (p. 281) preserved only partially. We will see that five dogmatic treatises were also written by Maximus in the form of letters.

Collections of Definitions

Some shorter texts attributed to Maximus belong to the literary form of collections containing a series of philosophical and theological definitions (ὅροι). Such compilations were popular in patristic and Byzantine literature (Furrer-Pilliod), and played an important part in theological controversies and discussions. However, some caution is required here, as it is always difficult to establish the authenticity of these texts as Maximian. I will discuss briefly four collections. The *Various Definitions* (*CPG* 7697 [14]) contain definitions of, for example, essence, nature, hypostasis, enhypostaton, and union; a longer recension of this same collection is preserved in *CPG* 7707 (21). The *Definitions of Differences (Distinctionum quibus res dirimuntur definitiones)* (*CPG* 7697 [17]) deals with four forms of separation (διαστολή). The popular short work (*opusculum*) called *Definitions of Union* (*CPG* 7697 [18]) presents definitions of the ten forms of ἕνωσις; the manuscripts contain several recensions of this text. Finally the *Different Definitions* (*CPG* 7697 [27]) concentrate on the notion of 'activity' (ἐνέργεια), compiling definitions taken from several Greek Fathers; a similar collection can be found in *CPG* 7707 (25); the same author (Maximus?) also wrote *CPG* 7697 (26b) and *CPG* 7707 (24).

Dispute with Pyrrhus

A special remark should be made here on the *Dispute with Pyrrhus* (*CPG* 7698), often quoted in modern studies. I have already mentioned *On the Ascetic Life*, a popular Maximian text combining characteristics typical of dialogues and of the question-and-answer format, which makes one think of *Dispute with Pyrrhus*, which is however of a totally different nature. The original Greek long title of this text starts with the words:

> A brief statement on the recent inquiry into the agitations concerning ecclesiastical dogmas which was held, in July, on the third indiction, by Pyrrhus, formerly Patriarch of Constantinople, and Maximus, the most

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> devout monk, in the presence of the most pious Gregory, Patrician, the most holy bishops, and the other men, beloved of God, found with him.
>
> (*DP*; trans. Farrell 1990: 2)

This dialogue relates to the debates that opposed Maximus to Pyrrhus, the former patriarch of Constantinople (638–41 and again, for some months, in 654), and these discussions took place in July 645, most probably at Carthage. At first sight, the *Dispute with Pyrrhus* seems to constitute a major dogmatic work of Maximus, but some caution is required, as some fifteen years ago my Leuven colleague Jacques Noret (Noret 1999) showed that this text is closely related to *Record of the Trial* and *Dispute at Bizya*, (p. 282) two documents illustrating the life of Maximus. *Dispute with Pyrrhus* was written in 655 at the earliest and Maximian authorship is highly problematic, although the text reflects his theological views well.

Mystagogy

There remain other parts of the Maximian oeuvre that cannot easily be assigned to a specific literary form. Let me discuss briefly some of these texts, starting with the remarkable *Mystagogy* (*CPG* 7704), a well-known initiation into the liturgy. The original title of this text seems to be, *About the Church's Mystagogy, in which the Symbolic Rites Performed in the Holy Church during the Divine Synaxis are Explained*. As it is often the case with Maximian works, and as we have seen on many occasions, *Mystagogy* is introduced by a long prologue, about 120 lines in the critical edition of Boudignon (2011). This prologue constitutes an epistolary preface with the typical starting formula, 'To Lord Theocharistus, Maximus the humble monk'. Theocharistus, whose identity remains a problem, has assisted at a conference given by Maximus about the liturgy of the Eucharist, and he has asked the Confessor to write down everything he said about the topic. In this respect, *Mystagogy* seems to be a sort of transcription of the stenographic notes taken at this conference.

Seven Theological Treatises

I also want to point to a series of theological treatises that are often addressed to friends or official connections of Maximus:

1. *To the Priest Marinus* (*CPG* 7697 [1]) was probably written at Carthage in 645–46 for Maximus' friend, Marinus of Cyprus, whom we have already met, and to whom the treatises *CPG* 7697 (7, 10, 19, 20) and most probably *Ep.* 20 are also addressed. The original title, which is very neutral, seems to have been, 'About different chapters, to the most holy Marinus, priest and administrator of the most holy metropolitan see of Constantia on the island of Cyprus'.[8]
2. The complete text of *Tracts on the Activities and the Wills* has not been preserved: we only have chapters 8 (part of *CPG* 7707 [24]), 50 (*CPG* 7697 [2]), and 51 (*CPG* 7697 [3]). Its title seems to have been, 'A treatise on the activities and wills'.
(p. 283) **3.** *To the Priest and Abbot George* (*CPG* 7697 [4]). The Greek title tells us that this short treatise contains some christological thoughts, written down at the request of a certain George.[9]
4. The very important, *On the Passage: 'Father, if it is possible, may the cup pass from me'* (*CPG* 7697 [6]) discusses Matthew 26: 39, a biblical passage crucial to the monothelite controversy.
5. The 'dogmatic treatise' (τόμος δογματικὸς) (*CPG* 7697 [7]) is addressed to the same Marinus of Cyprus whom we have already met.
6. The long treatise *CPG* 7697 (8) is a copy of a letter sent by Maximus, around 640, to bishop Nicandrus; the title is, 'Copy of a letter sent by Maximus among all saints to the most holy bishop Nicandrus'.
7. The next theological *opusculum, CPG* 7697 (9), was conceived in the form of a letter sent by Maximus to Sicily around the year 646. The title is, 'To the holy Fathers, to the abbots and monks and to the orthodox people, living on Sicily, island beloved of God, greetings from the humble and sinful Maximus, unworthy servant'.[10]

The enormous popularity of Maximus resulted in the attribution to the Confessor of many similar treatises, the authenticity of which is often still under debate.

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Maximus and the Use of Literary Formats: Final Remarks

It has become clear that Maximus used a large range of literary forms to transmit his knowledge and to organize his thoughts, and we have observed the shifting borders of these 'genres'. This variegated oeuvre has made Maximus one of the most influential thinkers of the Byzantine world, and even in modern Orthodox theology. However, in spite of his literary merits, Maximus is not among the most accessible authors of the patristic and Byzantine era. In his *Bibliotheca*, Photius blamed the Confessor for lack of clarity and the obscure style of his works (*Codex* 192, ed. Henry 1962: 80. 25–81. 9),[11] and I am afraid that I have to agree with the learned patriarch.

Suggested Reading

A detailed account of Maximus' life and works has been provided by Van Deun–Markesinis (2015).

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Notes:

([1]) Kazhdan 1999: 138–43 and 384–90; the articles in Odorico and Agapitos 2002; Rosenqvist 2007: 201–4; Agapitos 2008: 79–80.

([2]) Dörrie and Dörries 1966; Perrone 1991; Rey 2004; the ground-breaking article of Papadoyannakis 2006; Ermilov 2013; more particularly for this genre and the *Q.Thal.* of Maximus, see the excellent study of Blowers 1991.

([3]) In one of the three manuscripts, the word 'letter' [ἐπιστολή] has been added before Πρὸς τὸν κύριον Θωμᾶν.

([4]) For the Decalogue, see *Th.oec.* 1. 79, PG 90. 1113A3. The name Jesus (᾽Ιησοῦς) started with iota, the Greek letter for '10'; cf. *Th.oec.* 1. 79, PG 90. 1113A4–6.

([5]) The eight manuscript witnesses contain the following titles: γνῶμαι ἀποδεικτικαὶ τοῦ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστηρίου; γνῶμαι ἀποδεικτικαὶ περὶ τοῦ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστηρίου; ἕτερα κεφάλαια πρὸς ὀρθοδόξους περὶ τῶν δύο θελημάτων τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ᾽Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ; κεφάλαια ι΄ περὶ τῶν δύο θελημάτων τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ᾽Ιησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐγράφη δὲ πρὸς ὀρθοδόξους.

([6]) ἐπαπορήματα ὑποθετικὰ. The word ἐπαπόρημα recalls the technical notions ἄπορον or ἀπορία, showing the shifting boundaries between different literary forms.

([7]) Theodore introduced his work with the title: Συλλογὴ ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων ὅτι πρὸς ταῦτα τὰ δογματικὰ κεφάλαια, σύμφωνα ὄντα, καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἁγίοις ἀντιπαρεξεταζομένη τῶν Λατίνων ἡ δόξα οὐχ εὑρίσκεται σύμφωνος αὐτοῖς, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον παντοίᾳ αἱρέσει σύμφωνος καὶ ἔξω τῶν ὀρθῶν δογμάτων τῆς εὐσεβείας. In Leuven, Katrien Levrie is preparing a critical edition, not only of the text of Maximus, but also of the work of Agallianus; currently this last text is available only in the inferior edition of Dositheus of Jerusalem (1694: 432–9).

([8]) I would like to thank my colleague Basil Markesinis for permitting me to consult the proofs of his critical edition of these texts, forthcoming in CCSG.

([9]) Probably the same George mentioned by Maximus in his *Epp.* 29 and 31 (PG 91. 624A3–4 and PG 91. 625C5–8 respectively).

([10]) I have already pointed to a similar epistolary formula at the beginning of the *Q.Thal., Amb.Th., Ep. 2 ad Thomam, Computus ecclesiasticus*, and *Myst.*

([11]) On Maximus and Photius, see Schamp 1982.

Peter Van Deun

Peter Van Deun is professor of Byzantine studies in the Arts Faculty of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium).

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Passions, Ascesis, and the Virtues

Demetrios Bathrellos

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Abstract and Keywords

Maximus highlights the tension between pleasure and pain. Passions are pleasurable but cause pain and death. Ascesis is painful, but leads to spiritual pleasure and everlasting life. Christians are called to imitate Christ, who followed the painful path of obedience to the Father. By doing this, they acquire three cardinal virtues, which correspond to the tripartite division of the soul: love, which tames anger; self-mastery, which quenches concupiscence; and prayer, which turns the reasonable part of the soul towards God. Of these three virtues Maximus singles out love as the greatest of all. Christ exemplified perfect love in resisting both pleasurable and painful temptations. In the context of baptismal regeneration and Eucharistic participation, humankind is enabled, through ascesis, to share in Christ's love. In this way he reaches, through his restored γνώμη, the state of deification, which is the apex of Maximian 'virtue ethics'.

Keywords: ascesis, virtues, deification, pain, pleasure, prayer, passions, Eucharist

TWO noted students of Maximus have argued that his 'whole system is ascetical and mystical' (Sherwood 1955b: 28) and that 'he constructs not so much a system of dogmatics as a system of asceticism' (Florovsky 1987: 212). However, one should not fail to note that Maximus' ascetic writings, as well as his anthropology as a whole, are placed within a theological framework, founded on the biblical, conciliar, and patristic traditions. Without an examination of this context, his ascetic theology cannot be adequately understood.

Maximus' anthropology takes seriously into account the biblical narrative of the Creation and Fall of humankind. Adam, the first human being, was made in the image and after the likeness of God. He was sinless, wise, and free from the experience of physical corruption. He also enjoyed spiritual freedom and had the capacity for spiritual pleasure.[1] In painting the picture of the first human, Maximus is in intentional opposition to the Origenist and Evagrian systems, according to which life in the body is the unhappy result of a primordial Fall, which removed the spirits from the spiritual 'henad' and threw them into the material world, so that they might be purged and redeemed. Maximus is adamant in his belief that the human body was made *before* the Fall and is an indispensable part of the human composite nature, which is, in its entirety, good, at least as far as its '*logos* of being' is concerned (Sherwood 1955b). In this context, ascesis cannot be understood as an attempt to escape from the body or to mortify it, but rather as aiming at its sanctification (Cooper 2005: 9–10).

(p. 288) The Fall and the Dialectic of Pleasure and Pain

Humanity's initial goodness was adversely affected by the Fall. This brought about human disintegration through the passions. Human beings became impassioned and ensnared in a vicious circle, where pleasure and pain are predominant (*LA* 1; *Amb.Th.* 5).[2] According to Maximus, before the Fall Adam was not subject to either pleasure or pain. He had only a rational capacity for pleasure, by virtue of which he would be able to enjoy God. Adam,

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however, turned this rational desire for God towards the objects of the senses and thus experienced a pleasure that was against his nature. As a result, God's providence linked pain, and eventually death, to pleasure, as a punishing power, with a view to limiting humankind's sinful desirous movement towards sensible things. It is noteworthy that all human beings were ensnared in this vicious circle of pleasure, pain, and death because all of them, that is all of us, are conceived through a pleasurable union. Pleasure is the foundation of our own being (*Q.Thal*. 61).

On the basis of the pleasure–pain dialectic, Maximus draws a distinction between two different types of temptation. The former push us to experience pleasure whereas the latter consist in pain and sadness (*Q.Thal*. 58). Human beings often seek refuge in pleasure precisely in order to avoid pain and death. But while they attempt to alleviate their pain, the only thing they succeed in doing is to intensify it. Even when they procreate for the continuation of humanity, they experience pleasure, and thus, contrary to what they wish, they lead themselves and their offspring to death (*Q.Thal*. 21 and 61).Thus, sin leads to pain and death, and death and pain lead to sin. Both human nature and will are trapped in this vicious circle (*Q.Thal*. 21). The one who manages to resist pleasurable temptations through continence and endure the painful ones with patience is perfect (*Q.Thal*. 58). That one can experience the only true and life-giving pleasure, the pleasure produced by God's grace.

Elsewhere, Maximus adds that the Fall bequeathed to all human beings the passions of pleasure, sadness, desire, and fear. These passions, however, may become good ones, if they are used properly, namely, with a view to gaining the heavenly things (*Q.Thal*. 1). However, it is precisely through these passions, through this 'passible' element, that human beings are tempted, led to sin, and eventually to death (*Q.Thal*. 21). It is not accidental that Maximus argues that 'practically every sin is committed for pleasure' (*Car*. 2. 41).

(p. 289) The Restoration of Humanity in Jesus Christ

The vicious circle of pleasure and pain was broken by Christ's conception 'out of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary'. This conception was not stained by pleasure and, consequently, did not deserve to be followed by pain and death. Christ, by experiencing an unwarranted death, broke the vicious circle within which humanity was trapped. His pain and death restored human nature to its pre-fallen potentialities (*Q.Thal*. 61; *Or.dom*. 6).

However, in order for this to happen, not only Christ's conception, but his whole life had to be free from sinful pleasure. In addition, Christ had to endure pain and death in a sinless manner. In expanding this, Maximus places Christ at the centre of his ascetic theology and calls his readers to imitate him. This is not paradoxical if we consider that Christ was—according to Maximus' Chalcedonian Christology—not only perfect God but also perfect human being.

The Temptations and the 'Ascetic Example' of Christ

According to Maximus, on becoming human the Logos assumed the passible element of human nature, yet without sin. The evil powers, hidden in our passibility, saw that Christ shared our passible element. Therefore, they thought that he was subject to the law of nature—the link between pleasure and pain is here implied. Thus they tried to make him sin by tempting him with the two aforementioned types of temptation, the pleasurable ones and the painful ones. First, in the wilderness, they tried to make him succumb to pleasure. When they failed, they tried to make him display cowardice in the face of pain and death at the time of his passion. Christ, however, remained invulnerable at that time too. In so doing, he healed our passibility with regard to both pleasure and pain, and totally defeated the demonic powers that had been tormenting humanity (*Q.Thal*. 21; Bathrellos 2006: 46–7).

Maximus develops this further in one of his most important ascetic writings, *On the Ascetic Life (LA)*. There he links Jesus' temptations to the virtue of love, which stands at the centre of his ascetic theology. Jesus was tempted by the devil, writes Maximus, to transgress the two-fold commandment of love towards God and towards human beings. In the wilderness, the devil tried to 'make even him prefer the substance of this world to love for God'. For he knew that 'there are three things by which everything human is moved—I mean food, money, and reputation' (*LA* 10).[3] When he failed to persuade Christ to transgress this commandment,

> [The devil] strove to persuade him, on returning to society, to transgress the commandment of love for neighbour. For this reason … that vindictive wretch stirred up (p. 290) the wicked pharisees and scribes

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> to their various plots against him in order to bring him to hate the schemers … and so he would be attaining his purpose by making him a transgressor of the commandment of love for neighbour.
>
> (*LA* 10, Van Deun 2000a: 27. 210–15)

Christ, however, resisted the temptation and kept the commandment of love for neighbour (*LA* 11–12). As Christ resisted pleasure and endured pain and death, and thus kept the commandment of love both for God and for human beings, human beings are also called to resist pleasure and to endure the pains of ascetic life in order to keep the same salvific commandment.

Christ and the Christian

However, at this point Maximus himself raises an objection. The 'brother' in his *LA* asks the 'old man', who urges him to imitate Christ, the following question: 'Who can imitate the Lord? Though he became human, the Lord was God. But I am a man, a sinner, enslaved to tens of thousands of passions. How then can I imitate the Lord?' (*LA* 3). The question makes a valid point, for, as Maximus argues elsewhere, Christ, in contradistinction to us, was not 'continent' (ἐγκρατής) but 'passionless' (ἀπαθής) (*Opusc*. 1). How then is it possible for us to imitate him? This is possible for two reasons. First, because humanity is endowed with freedom. Maximus believes that there are things that are in our power (τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν; e.g. *Ep*. 5), and emphasizes both the possibility and the significance of our choice for (or against) God. He distinguishes sharply between the animals, which are led by nature, and human beings, who are led by reason (*LA* 8). He mentions that there are three things towards which human beings move by their will (βούλησις, γνώμη, and προαίρεσις), namely, God, nature, and the world (*Ep*. 9).[4] Human beings, therefore, for Maximus, are not enslaved to their (fallen) nature. In fact, Maximus claims that the aim of Christ's commandments is 'to free humanity from nature' (*Ep.* 9, PG 91. 448C; cf. *Amb.Th*. 1).

Secondly, human freedom has been sacramentally restored. Maximus comments on John the Evangelist's statement that *the one who is born of the Spirit both does not and cannot sin* (1 John 3: 9; cf. 5: 18). For Maximus, John has in mind the Christian who is baptized and regenerated by the Spirit. To be born of the Spirit means to be born into a new life, into a life of deification, that is, into a life of participation in the life of God (*Q.Thal*. 6). Further, in his *Mystagogy*, Maximus writes that reception of Holy Communion entails the deification of those who are worthy (*Myst*. 11; Larchet 1996). Therefore, although human beings will never become fully identical to Christ, their Christ-like baptismal birth of the Spirit makes it possible for them to defeat the passions and live a virtuous life that leads to salvation. In this process, Christ himself works the works of virtue in Christians (*LA* 34).

(p. 291) However, in order that all this may be done, one should take the advice that the 'old man' gives to the 'brother' in *On the Ascetic Life*: 'none of those enslaved to material things can imitate the Lord. But those who can say: '*Behold, we have left all and followed you* (Matt. 19: 27)—these receive power both to imitate him and to do well in all his commandments.' (*LA* 3, Van Deun 2000a: 11. 57–60; Sherwood 1955a: 105). Maximus puts forward Paul as such an example (*LA* 4 and 14–15). Moreover, Maximus insists that it is important to know 'the purpose of the Lord', namely, the teaching and deeper meaning of the Gospels with regard to loving even our enemies (*LA* 9–13), which is for Maximus a quintessential aim of Christian ascesis. So human freedom, its sacramental restoration, the decision to live an ascetic life, and a proper understanding of the content of the biblical virtue of love are the key points enabling human beings to imitate Christ. This imitation includes the practising of virtues, through which human beings contribute to an 'incarnation of God' in themselves (*Amb.Th*. 1). The question of how exactly all this may be done, we will explore in the section entitled 'Detachment and the Cultivation of Virtues'.

What are the Passions?

Maximus gives us definitions of both the passions and the impassioned soul. 'Passion is a movement of the soul contrary to nature, either in irrational love or in senseless hate of something or on account of some material thing' (*Car*. 2. 16, PG 90. 988D–989A; cf. 2. 35). Elsewhere he writes: 'The impassioned soul is impure, for it is filled with thoughts of cupidity and hate' (*Car*. 1. 14, PG 90. 964C).

The word 'passion', however, may imply something neutral or even good. For instance, the movement of all beings that are not capable of self-movement or self-power is characterized as passion (*Amb.Io*.2). Moreover, Maximus speaks of 'the blessed passion of holy charity' (*Car*. 3. 67, PG 90. 1037A–B), and a little further on he refers to 'the

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laudable passion of love' (*Car*. 3. 71, PG 90. 1037C). Passion may also mean the result of God's action upon the saints. Maximus, for instance, refers to the passion of the apostle Paul's ascension (*Amb.Io*. 79). Therefore, we have to distinguish between natural and unnatural (or against nature [παρὰ φύσιν]: *Ep*. 4, PG 91. 413A) passions, the latter being understood as moral defects. But even these are not self-existent vices of the soul, but rather consist in the misuse of the soul's powers. 'Misuse of the rational power is found in ignorance and folly; of the irascible and concupiscible, in hate and intemperance' (*Car*. 3. 3, PG 90. 1017C). This is why Maximus suggests, not the eradication, but the transformation, of the passions—anger must be transformed to love, and desire (or concupiscence) to joy (*Amb.Io*. 1). Or, as Blowers has put it,

> [C]oncupiscence (ἐπιθυμία) can be turned into 'the appetitive movement of the intellectual desire for divine things', pleasure (ἡδονή) into the mind's gladness at being (p. 292) lured to divine gifts; fear (φόβος) into cautious concern for retributive punishments (*Q.Thal*. 10) … grief (λύπη) into a 'corrective repentance' (*Q.Thal.* 1) … Ἐπιθυμία can be transmuted into divine ἔρως, and ire into 'spiritual fervency, red-hot eternal movement, and temperate madness'.
>
> (*Q.Thal.* 55, Blowers 1996: 71–2)

The above probably relate to Maximus' belief that evil is not self-existent. For Maximus 'evil is the privation of the good' (*Cor*. 3.29, PG 90.1025C).

That evil and the passions do not consist in things themselves but in their misuse is a fundamental aspect of Maximus' theology. Maximus argues that 'food is not evil, but gluttony; nor is the begetting of children, but fornication; nor money, but avarice; nor glory, but vainglory' (*Car*. 3. 4, PG 90. 1017C; cf. *LA* 7). Likewise, Maximus claims that:

> Scripture takes away nothing that God has given us for use, but chastises immoderation and corrects unreasonableness. Thus it does not forbid one to eat, beget children, have money and administer it properly; but it does forbid one to be gluttonous, to fornicate, and so on. Nor does it even forbid one to think of these things … but to think of them with passion.
>
> (*Car*. 4. 66, PG 90. 1064B)

For Maximus, the motivation or the purpose of doing something is a safe indicator of whether one acts in an impassioned way or not. For instance, he writes that it is possible to speak of one's brother's sin, which is normally an impassioned act, with detachment and with a good intention, in which case this act is not sinful (*Car*. 3. 73, PG 90. 1040B).

Maximus believes that the passions defile the entire human being: mind, soul, and body. 'The mind', he writes, 'is impure, first in having false knowledge, then in not knowing one of the universals … thirdly in having impassioned thoughts, fourthly in consenting to sin' (*Car*. 3. 34, PG 90. 1027B). 'The soul is impure in not acting according to nature' (*Car*. 3. 35, PG 90. 1027C). 'The body is impure in sin of deed' (*Car*. 3. 36, PG 90. 1027C).

Moreover, Maximus occasionally gives definitions of individual passions. For instance, he writes that 'self-love (φιλαυτία) is the impassioned, unreasonable affection for one's body' (*Car*. 3. 8, PG 90. 1019A).[5] Furthermore, he stresses the importance of realizing that our being is subject to passions. How are we to accomplish this? Maximus explains that 'the mind that gives its time to some sensible thing certainly experiences some passion in its regard, as desire or grief or anger or ill will' (*Car*. 2. 2, PG 90. 984B). Also, with regard to possessions he writes that 'some owners own with detachment; therefore, stripped of their goods they do not grieve … Some own with attachment; wherefore, about to be stripped, they become grief-stricken, (p. 293) like the rich man in the Gospel, who went away sad' (*Car*. 2. 89, PG 90. 1013A–B; cf. Matt. 19: 22).

Distribution of Passions

As has been shown by others (Thunberg 1995; Nichols 1993), on this topic Maximus inherited a very rich philosophical and theological tradition, which includes Platonism and neo-Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism,[6] as well as the work of the Cappadocians, Evagrius, Ps-Dionysius, and Diadochus of Photice. Evagrius in particular, a very influential authority in monastic circles, had suggested and bequeathed a list of eight passions which plague

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post-lapsarian humanity.[7] These are gluttony (γαστριμαργία), fornication (πορνεία), avarice (φιλαργυρία), grief (λύπη), anger (ὀργή), listlessness (ἀκηδία), vainglory (κενοδοξία), and pride (ὑπερηφάνια). The first two passions are closely related to each other and fall within the ambit of ἐπιθυμητικόν, and the same applies more or less to the third. Grief and anger belong to the irascible part. The classic monastic passion of listlessness also belongs here, being related to grief. Finally, vainglory and pride pertain to the rational faculty.

In spite of his rejection of Evagrius' metaphysical system, Maximus adopted many of his views on the ascetic life, including the aforementioned list. However, he added to this list another four passions: rapacity (πλεονεξία), resentfulness (μνησικακία), envy (φθόνος), and slander (καταλαλιά), which are no more than elaborations of the original octet.[8] Maximus also refers to the passions of laziness (ἀργία) (*Car*. 4. 71, PG 90. 1065A) and carelessness (ἀμέλεια) (*Car.* 2. 82).

Maximus organizes the passions in accordance to the two constituents of humanity (soul—body) and, in particular, to the parts of the soul. 'Of the passions some are of the body, some of the soul' (*Car*. 1. 64, PG 90. 973C). '[T]he passions lay hold of either the irascible part of the soul or the concupiscible only, or also of the rational' (*Car*. 1. 67, PG 90. 973D; cf. 1. 65). Sherwood remarks that on this Maximus follows Evagrius, although for the latter the cardinal passion of the irascible part of the soul, namely anger, is to be overcome through meekness, because of the harm it does to one's knowledge. Maximus, however, insists not so much on (knowledge or) meekness as on love, which is, for him, the remedy for anger (Sherwood 1995a: 85).

In comparing the passions, Maximus argues that those of the irascible part of the soul are naturally harder to oppose than those of the concupiscible part. Moreover, he adds that there is one passion that affects the entire soul: 'listlessness (ἀκηδία), (p. 294) grasping all the powers of the soul, excites practically all the passions' (*Car*. 1. 67). Elsewhere Maximus, more in line with the philosophical tradition, refers to the following cardinal passions (γενικαὶ κακίαι) of the soul: folly, cowardice, intemperance, and injustice, corresponding to the cardinal virtues of prudence, courage, temperance, and justice (*Car*. 2. 79). Maximus gives also a detailed and somewhat scholastic analysis of the passions of the concupiscible and irascible parts of the soul (*Amb.Io.* 62). Finally, he explains that the passions sometimes take one form in monks and another in seculars or 'worldlings'. 'This is proper to the monk's vainglory, that he grows vain over virtue and all that goes with it … Of the worldling's vainglory and pride this is proper, that he be vain and elated over good looks, wealth, influence, and prudence' (*Car*. 3. 84).

Causes and Genealogy of the Passions

For Maximus, 'self-love [is] the mother of the passions' (*Car*. 2. 8). 'From it doubtless arise those first three capital, impassioned, raving thoughts—I mean gluttony, avarice, and vainglory … From them the whole catalogue of vices is born' (*Car*. 2. 59). Elsewhere Maximus argues that 'some passions are productive of licentiousness, some of hate; some are productive of both licentiousness and hate. Excessive and delicate eating are the cause of licentiousness; avarice and vainglory, of hate for one's neighbour. Their mother, self-love, is cause of both together' (*Car.* 3. 6–7). Self-love is more obviously related to the passions of the concupiscible part of the soul. Maximus believes that self-love leads the monk to the 'pit of voluptuousness' and that 'to the worldling it proposes at once to make provision for concupiscence' (*Car*. 2. 60).

As already mentioned, Maximus believes that 'practically every sin is committed for pleasure' (*Car*. 2. 41). The passion of concupiscence is often excited by memories: 'Impassioned memories of women excite the soul's concupiscible element; their cause is want of self-control in eating and drinking, and frequent, unreasonable association with these same women' (*Car*. 3. 20). Maximus adds that 'when the concupiscible part of the soul is frequently roused, there is induced in the soul an almost fixed habit (ἕξις) of pleasure' (*Car*. 2. 70). With regard to avarice, Maximus writes that their causes are 'love of pleasure, vainglory, and lack of faith, which is worse than the other two' (*Car*. 3. 17).

As to the *irascible element*, Maximus warns his reader that 'if you are insulted by someone or made of no account in some affair, then beware of angry thoughts lest by grief they remove you from charity and place you in the region of hate' (*Car*. 1. 29). Moreover, Maximus highlights the negative effects of impassioned memory: 'Impassioned memories of people who have caused us sadness stir the temper; their cause is love of pleasure, vainglory, and attachment to material things' (*Car*. 3. 20). Knowledge may also adversely affect the irascible part of the soul. People tend to feel envy for those who are knowledgeable. Conversely, knowledgeable people cause the

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envy of others (*Car*. 4. 61).

With regard to the passions of the mind, Maximus implies that they are the most deceitful. This is mainly the case with pride, for pride 'arises with the inefficaciousness (p. 295) of the passions' (*Car*. 2. 40). This means that when one is no longer tempted by passions, then one may start thinking unwisely highly of oneself. This in turn will lead to spiritual disaster. Maximus adds to this the emergence of the passion of vainglory. 'When you overcome one of the dishonourable passions, such as gluttony, fornication, anger, or rapacity, then at once the thought of vainglory lights upon you. When you overcome this, pride follows after' (*Car.* 3. 59). He also remarks that 'vainglory, whether removed or remaining, begets pride; if removed, it produces presumption (οἴησιν); if remaining, [it produces] boastfulness (ἀλαζονείαν)' (*Car*. 3. 61). Therefore, he justifiably believes that whereas 'the origin of all the passions is self-love, their end [is] pride' (*Car*. 3. 57).

The Passions and the Thoughts

Maximus sees a close link between the passions and the thoughts (*logismoi*). He divides the latter into two types, the simple and the compound. Simple thoughts have only a noetic content, whereas compound ones are stained by some passion. 'Some thoughts are simple, some are compound. The simple are passionless, the compound are impassioned, composed, as it were, of passion and representation' (*Car*. 2. 84). The fight against the *logismoi* is essential for overcoming the passions. Maximus makes at this point one more crucial distinction: 'It is one thing to fight mere thoughts that the passions be not roused; it is another to fight impassioned thoughts that consent may not be given' (*Car*. 3. 88).

Maximus' remark introduces us to the process by which the *logismoi* excite the passions and lead to sinful acts. 'First the memory brings a mere thought to the mind; and when this remains for a while, passion is roused; and when this is not removed, it sways the mind to consent; and when this is given, the actual sinning finally comes about' (*Car*. 1. 84). But what is the root of sinful thoughts? For Maximus:

> [T]he mind receives impassioned thoughts from three sources—from the senses, from the body's condition and temperament, and from the memory. From the senses, when they, receiving impressions from the objects of the passions, move the mind to impassioned thinking; through the body's condition and temperament, that is, when this condition, altered by undisciplined living … moves the mind to impassioned thinking; through memory, when the memory recalls the thoughts of things that have stirred our passion, it likewise moves the mind to impassioned thinking.
>
> (*Car*. 2. 74)

However, it is not the case that only the thoughts excite the passions but also that the passions give rise to tempting thoughts:

> As the hungry person's mind forms phantoms of bread and the thirsty one's of water, so the glutton imagines a variety of food, the voluptuous forms of women, the vain (p. 296) person [imagines] attentions from others, the avaricious gain, the vengeful person vengeance on the offender, the envious person evil for the object of her envy—and similarly for the other passions.
>
> (*Car*. 2. 68)

Elsewhere Maximus gives us an interesting genealogy of impassioned thoughts:

> Self-love is the … cause of all the impassioned thoughts. By it are begotten the three capital thoughts of concupiscence—gluttony, avarice, and vainglory. By gluttony, fornication of thought is begotten; by avarice, rapacity of thought; by vainglory, pride of thought. All the rest follow one or the other of these three—the thoughts of anger, grief, grudges, sloth, envy, detraction, and the rest.
>
> (*Car*. 3. 56)

Succumbing to impassioned thoughts has, of course, adverse consequences. 'Do not soil your mind', writes Maximus, 'by tolerating thoughts of concupiscence and anger; otherwise, falling from pure prayer, you will fall in with the spirit of listlessness' (*Car*. 1. 49). Finally, Maximus warns his readers that to be free from *logismoi* does not

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equal being free from passions: 'It is one thing to be released from thoughts, another to be freed from passions. Often indeed a person is released from thoughts of things to which that person is attached when they are not present, yet the passions are hidden in the soul and are discovered when the things appear' (*Car*. 1. 78).

The Passions and the Demons

Maximus often speaks of the demons' attacks on Christians, whom they tempt to succumb to their passions and transgress the commandments of God. Demons often use *logismoi* in order to excite the passions: 'From the passions embedded in our souls the demons seize opportunities of stirring up in us impassioned thoughts. Then, warring upon the mind through them, they force it on to consent to sin' (*Car*. 2. 31; Völker 1965: 186). The demons tempt us in a manner that is similar to that in which they tempted Christ: 'The demons tempt us either by themselves or arm against us those that have no fear of the Lord. By themselves, when we are alone apart from other people, as they tempted the Lord in the desert; by people, when we associate with people, as they tried the Lord through the Pharisees' (*Car*. 2. 13). Likewise, 'when the demons see us despising the things of the world, lest for such things we hate people and fall from charity, they then incite calumnies against us, in order that, not bearing the grief, we hate the calumniators' (*Car*. 4. 87). The demons 'attack with things those that are occupied in affairs; with thoughts those that live withdrawn from affairs' (*Car*. 2. 71).

Maximus gives us a more precise idea of the war waged by demons against us in writing about the passion of fornication:

> (p. 297) Violent is the demon of fornication and vehemently he sets upon those that contend against passion. This he does especially through their carelessness in eating and through contact with women. With the suavity of pleasure he imperceptibly steals upon a person's mind and then, through the memory, assails that person in retirement, inflaming the body and presenting various forms to the mind.
>
> (*Car*. 2. 19)

We may see here how the human body and its passions (such as gluttony, carelessness, fornication), and memory are used by the demons in order to tempt people to sin.

However, it is possible to resist both the passions and the demonic attacks. 'The demons are weakened when the passions in us are lessened through the commandments; but they perish when finally through detachment of soul the passions are utterly destroyed' (*Car*. 2. 22). God allows the war of the demons for several reasons, including 'that in the attacks and counter-attacks we come to distinguish virtue and vice' and that 'having had some experience of vice, we will hate it with a consummate hate' (*Car*. 2. 67).

The Individual and Social Consequences of the Passions

Maximus, as expected, gives a negative view of the impassioned person. He writes, for instance, that if 'we are lazy and careless and do not cleanse ourselves from the passions, which check and blind our mind' we will not be able to acquire true knowledge (*Car*. 4. 77). 'The roused passions in one's soul blind one's intelligence and do not permit that person to look into the rays of truth nor to distinguish the good from the bad' (*Car*. 4. 92). By contrast, 'when the mind is stripped of passions and illumined by contemplation of creatures, then it can be in God and pray as it ought' (*Car*. 2. 100). Unless a person is freed from the passions, (s)he might not begin to enjoy the eternal goods (*Car*. 4. 78). Moreover, Maximus warns us that 'just as night succeeds day, and winter summer, so pain and grief succeed vainglory and pleasure' (*Car*. 2. 65). And whoever 'nourishes hate for another person cannot be at peace with God' (*Car*. 4. 35). Therefore, failure to overcome passions enslaves one to them, undermines one's relationship with God, and puts one's salvation at risk.

Maximus, however, insists also on the consequences of the passions for the life of the community. The passion of concupiscence leads people to 'irrational impulse and association', whereas the passion of anger leads them to 'flee from the brethren' (*Car*. 1. 51). So for Maximus both the formation of impassioned relationships and the dissolution of the community are to be equally avoided. With regard to the latter, Maximus writes that 'the things that separate from the love of friends are these: to envy or be envied, to cause or suffer loss, to insult or be insulted, and suspicions' (*Car*. 4. 21).

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Maximus gives some useful pieces of advice for the formation and the sustenance of the community. A fundamental step for the formation of the community (p. 298) is the decision to renounce one's own will: 'You who have determined to live with spiritual persons, at the outset renounce your wills; in no other way will you be able to be at peace either with God or with your fellows' (*Car*. 4. 38). The next step is to fight against one's passions: 'be no self-pleaser and you will not hate your brothers' (*Car*. 4. 37). Also, to resist evil thoughts: 'Do not take the reasons that bring grief to you and work hate towards your brothers as favourable thoughts, though they seem to be true. Turn from such as from deadly serpents' (*Car*. 4. 31). When the time of temptation and trial goes by, one should remain careful, lest it return: 'In the time of peace do not recall what a brother said in the time of grief … lest in suffering grudging thoughts you turn again to destructive hate of a brother' (*Car*. 4. 34). In this way a community may emulate the saints and the angels, whose 'unspeakable peace … is comprised in these two attitudes, in love for God and in love for one another' (*Car*. 4. 36). Given the experience of the difficulties inherent in human relationships, Maximus is justified in believing that:

> [O]nly the strict observers of the commandments and the genuine initiates in the divine judgements do not desert their friends when suffering divinely-permitted trials. People who disregard the commandments and are inexperienced in the divine judgements take pleasure with their friend in prosperity, but in the hardships of trial they desert that friend, or even, it may be, side with his opponents.
>
> (*Car*. 4. 97)

Ascesis and the Healing of the Passions

Maximus emphasizes that only God is good by nature, but adds that 'the imitator of God is good through conformity of will' (*Car*. 4. 90). So humankind's struggle to conform its will to the will of God is essential for the healing of the passions. Ascetic struggle consists largely in the effort to subject our will to the divine will, which makes us imitators of Christ.

One of the first things to be said concerning the healing of passions is a warning against false ascesis. 'Some people', Maximus writes, 'restrain themselves from the passions because of human fear; some because of vainglory; others because of self-mastery; yet others are freed from the passions through the divine judgements' (*Car*. 2. 23). Maximus places great emphasis on the intention of ascesis: 'There are many things people do that are of themselves noble, and still for a certain reason they are not noble; for example, fasts and vigils, prayer and psalmody, alms and hospitality are of themselves noble deeds, but when they are done for vainglory, they are no longer so' (*Car*. 2. 35). Ascesis should be undertaken only for the sake of God: 'God seeks the intention of everything we do, whether we do it for God or for some other reason' (*Car*. (p. 299) 2. 36). For Maximus, 'God's judgement looks not to the things done, but to the intention' (*Car*. 2. 37).

Another warning that Maximus sends us is against a superficial ascesis and a merely external overcoming of the passions:

> The one who has renounced things, such as women, money, and the like, makes a monk of the outer person, but not yet of the inner. The one who renounces the impassioned representations of these same things makes a monk of the inner person … It is easy to make a monk of the outer person … but it is no little struggle to make a monk of the inner person.
>
> (*Car*. 4. 50)

Moreover, people are often deceived into believing that they are freed from passions, whereas in fact they are not, for 'there are many passions hidden in our souls; they are then exposed when the objects appear' (*Car*. 4. 52). 'It can be that a person is not disturbed by passions in the absence of the objects, enjoying a partial detachment; but if the objects appear, the passions immediately vex the mind' (*Car*. 4. 53). Only if the *inner* person is freed from the passions may one enjoy the eternal goods (*Car*. 4. 78).

The various forms of ascesis correspond to both soul and body, and also, more specifically, to the parts of the soul. 'Of the passions some are of the body, some of the soul … Charity and self-mastery cut both of them back, the first those of the soul, the other those of the body' (*Car*. 1. 64). Elsewhere Maximus adds that 'humility and the bearing of ascetic pains (κακοπάθεια) free a person from every sin; the one by checking the passions of the soul,

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the other those of the body' (*Car*. 1. 76).

As to the passions of the soul, Maximus further argues that, through the divine doctrines, God bestows the illumination of knowledge, whereas through the commandments God bestows detachment (*Car*. 1. 77); the above correspond to the mind (λογιστικόν) and the concupiscible and irascible (παθητικόν) parts of the soul. Maximus adds that 'alms heal the irascible part of the soul; fasting abates the concupiscible; prayer purifies the mind' (*Car*. 1. 79). Moreover:

> [C]ertain things put a stop to the movements of passion and do not allow them to go on to increase; others lessen them and make them decrease. For example, fasting, work, and vigils do not permit concupiscence to grow; while solitude and meditation, prayer, and burning love for God diminish it and bring it to nothing. Similarly for anger: for instance, long-suffering, forgetfulness of grudges, and meekness put a stop to it and do not allow it to grow; while charity, alms, kindness, and benevolence make it diminish.
>
> (*Car*. 2. 47)

Elsewhere Maximus gives the following advice: 'Check the soul's irascible element with charity; reduce the concupiscible with self-mastery; and wing its rational part with (p. 300) prayer' (*Car*. 4. 80). 'Love and self-mastery free the soul from passions; reading and contemplation deliver the mind from ignorance' (*Car*. 4. 86).

Maximus gives additional advice for deliverance from specific passions:

> The things for which we have passions are, for example, these: women, money, gifts, and so on. And one is then able to contemn women when … one properly emaciates the body with self-mastery; and money, when one decides to be content with a sufficiency; and reputation, when one loves the secret exercise of virtues, known to God alone.
>
> (*Car*. 4. 29)

For Maximus, pain is a good antidote for pleasurable passions. The affliction of the flesh brings about holiness, chastity, and charity (*Car*. 1. 45). 'Some temptations bring people pleasure, some grief, some bodily pain. The physician of souls by means of his judgements applies the remedy to each soul according to the cause of its passions' (*Car*. 2. 44). 'That person surely wants to be healed who makes no resistance to the healing drugs. These are the pains and griefs which diverse circumstances bring on. The person who resists does not know what is going on here nor what that person would gain from it upon leaving this world' (*Car*. 3. 82).

Whereas the above antidotes aim mainly at the healing of the concupiscible part (ἐπιθυμητικόν), Maximus suggests scorn for earthly things and love for our neighbour as remedies for the irascible part of the soul. He writes that 'the one that does not scorn glory and pleasure, and avarice which increases them and exists because of them, cannot cut away the occasions of anger' (*Car*. 1. 75). He also warns his reader: 'Do not say … "Mere faith in our Lord Jesus Christ can save me". For this is ineffective unless you also possess charity through good works' (*Car*. 1. 39). Love and prayer for our enemies free us from 'hate, grief, anger, and grudges' (*Car*. 1. 61). Maximus emphasizes the practice of prayer: 'If you bear someone a grudge, pray for her and you stop the rising passion. By prayer you are separating the grief from the memory of the evil which she did you; and so, becoming charitable and kind, you entirely wipe out the passion from your soul' (*Car*. 3. 90).

With regard to the passions of the mind, Maximus refers to the healing of the *logismoi*, of the impassioned images and memories, of ignorance and forgetfulness, and of vainglory and pride. With regard to the *logismoi*, Maximus suggests 'psalmody or prayer or elevation of mind' (*Car*. 4. 48). He writes that 'if you will to be master of your thoughts, attend to your passions and you will easily drive them out of your mind away from your thoughts. Thus for fornication, fast, keep vigil, labour, keep to yourself. For anger and grief, scorn repute and dishonour and material things. For grudges, pray for the one that offends and you will be set free' (*Car*. 3. 13). And he adds that 'through the doing of the commandments the mind puts off the passions; through the spiritual contemplation of the visible creation, concupiscent thoughts of things' (*Car*. 1. 94).

With regard to images and memories, he writes that one should scorn the things of which they are images or memories (*Car*. 1. 63). For ignorance and forgetfulness, Maximus suggests as remedy 'spiritual contemplations' (*Car*. 1. 5). As to vainglory and (p. 301) pride, his advice is this: 'Secret exercise removes vainglory; ascribing

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our right actions to God removes pride' (*Car*. 3. 62). Finally, Maximus recommends thankfulness to God who delivers us from the worldly and impassioned life (*Car*. 1. 48; Völker 1965: 174–90).

Detachment and the Cultivation of Virtues

For Maximus, detachment is not to do merely with our behaviour but mainly with the spiritual depth and condition of our souls. Maximus defines detachment (ἀπάθεια) in this way: 'The calm of detachment is a peaceful condition of the soul in which it is with difficulty moved to vice' (*Car*. 1. 36). Maximus distinguishes between partial and perfect detachment. 'It can be that a person is not disturbed by passions in the absence of the objects, enjoying a partial detachment; but if the objects appear, the passions immediately vex the mind' (*Car*. 4. 53). By contrast, if the object 'appears and you remain unmoved both as to the object itself and as to the recollection of it afterwards, know that then you have entered the confines of detachment' (*Car*. 4. 54). Elsewhere, Maximus adds that 'detachment [is] the wiping out of sin. And we do not yet have perfect detachment when we are sometimes beset by passions, sometimes not. We have not therefore perfectly attained forgiveness of sins' (*LA* 44). An additional sign of detachment is simplicity of thought: 'A sign of consummate detachment is that the ideas of things always arising in the heart are mere thoughts' (*Car*. 1. 93).

Maximus believes that we should not only overcome the passions, but also cultivate the virtues. Actually, as we have already seen, there is no other way to overcome the passions than through cultivating the virtues. So Maximus writes that 'the virtues separate the mind from the passions' (*Car*. 3. 44). Maximus organizes the virtues in a way reminiscent of that in which he organizes the passions:[9]

> There are virtues of the body and virtues of the soul. Those of the body include fasting, vigils, sleeping on the ground, service of others, manual work … The virtues of the soul are charity, long-suffering, meekness, self-mastery, prayer, and so on. There are excuses, such as sickness, for not practising the virtues of the body, but there is no excuse for not practising the virtues of the soul.
>
> (*Car*. 2. 57)

In *Ep.* 5 Maximus opposes the main passions of the three parts of the soul to the corresponding virtues of gnostic judgement, courage, and temperance: gnostic judgement (φρόνησις γνωστική) is opposed to ignorance and superstition (the rational part of the soul); courage to cowardice and audacity (the irascible part); temperance to promiscuity (p. 302) (the desiring part). Elsewhere, Maximus speaks of three virtues that comprise all the others, which correspond to the three parts of the soul: love, self-mastery, and prayer. 'Love tames anger; self-mastery quenches concupiscence; prayer withdraws the mind from all thoughts and presents it, stripped, to God' (*LA* 19).

As there is a genealogy in the deployment of passions, there is also a more or less standard process in the emergence of virtues. 'Charity springs from the calm of detachment, detachment from hope in God, hope from patience and long-suffering; and these from all embracing self-mastery; self-mastery from fear of God, fear of God from faith in the Lord' (*Car*. 1. 2; cf. 1.81). Elsewhere Maximus writes that purity leads to discernment, discernment to detachment, and detachment to perfect love (*Car*. 4. 91). The expression 'perfect love' is particularly significant, for Maximus believes that there are five forms of love. Human beings love one another either for God's sake, or for natural reasons, or for vainglory, or for avarice, or for love of pleasure. 'The first is praiseworthy, the second is in between, the rest belong to the passions' (*Car*. 2. 9).

Maximus also draws attention to the virtues of the mind. For instance, he writes that 'the pure mind is to be found either with mere ideas of human things, or in the natural contemplation of the visible creation, or in that of the invisible, or in the light of the Holy Trinity' (*Car*. 1. 97). Maximus claims that 'to look on with detachment when forms of women and of those who have offended us arise in the mind' represents a very high moral standard (*Car*. 2. 87). Prayer is instrumental for acquiring the virtues, and conversely a mind stripped of passions may pray perfectly (*Car*. 2. 100).

The virtues are necessary not only in order to overcome the passions, but also in order to keep them subdued: 'Virtue, when it remains for a long time, kills the passions, but neglected, rouses them again' (*Car*. 4. 54). Having the virtues is a state higher than detachment:

> Not to have envy, not to be angry, not to hold a grudge against one who offends you, is not for all that to

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> bear the other charity. For it can be that a person, not yet loving, does not return evil for evil, because of the commandment; nevertheless that person does not yet do good for evil, spontaneously. Purposely to do good to those who hate you belongs to perfect spiritual love alone.
>
> (*Car*. 2. 49)

For Maximus, 'that soul is pure which is freed from passions and gladdened continually by divine charity' (*Car*. 1. 34). The person who is 'without passion loves all human beings alike' (*Car*. 1. 25). The central biblical virtue of charity enjoys pride of place (Garrigues 1976: 176–99). All in all, Maximus believes that:

> [W]hen mentally you say nothing nor do anything shameful, when you have no grudge against the one that harms or abuses you, when in the time of prayer you ever keep your mind untouched with matter and forms—know then that you have come to the full measure of detachment and perfect charity.
>
> (*Car*. 4. 42)

(p. 303) The relation between passions, ascesis and the virtues is further clarified by Maximus in his disputation with Pyrrhus. Here is the relevant passage:

> PYRRHUS: Virtues, then, are natural?
>
> MAXIMUS: Yes, they are natural.
>
> PYRRHUS: If they are natural, why do they not exist in all human beings equally, since all people have an identical nature?
>
> MAXIMUS: They do exist equally in all people who have an identical nature.
>
> PYRRHUS: Why then is there such a great disparity in us?
>
> MAXIMUS: Because we do not practise what is natural to us to an equal degree. For, if we all practised equally what is natural to us … then one virtue would be seen in all, just as there is one nature, and that one virtue would not admit a 'more' or 'less'.
>
> PYRRHUS: If what is natural to us comes about not through ascesis but by reason of our creation, and if virtue is natural, then why is it that we acquire the virtues, which are natural, through labour and ascesis?
>
> MAXIMUS: Ascesis and the toils that go with it were devised by the lovers of virtue … not in order to newly reintroduce the virtues from outside, for they inhere in us from creation, as has been said. Therefore, when deception is completely expelled, the soul immediately exhibits the splendour of natural virtue.
>
> (*DP*; trans. Farrell 1990: 32–4, modified)

But if, for Maximus, the virtues are natural to all, Christians have the extra privilege of divine grace:

> Some of the brethren suppose they have no part in the graces of the Holy Spirit … The genuine believer in Christ has in himself all the divine graces together … All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in our hearts. They are made manifest to the heart in proportion to each one's purification by the commandments.
>
> (*Car*. 4. 69–70)

Concluding Remarks on the Theological Significance of Maximus' Ascetic Teaching

Finally, I would like to highlight some aspects of Maximus' ascetic theology with particular theological significance, starting with the fact that Maximus' ascetic teaching is deeply theological. It is firmly located within a theological context, framed by the central doctrines of Christianity: the Trinity, Christology, Creation and the Fall, and ecclesiology.

Secondly, Maximus' ascetic theology is not a shallow description of human moral behaviour, but a deep analysis of

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the dark sides of the human heart. For Maximus, the (p. 304) aim of ascesis is to transform the inner person. This is a profound transformation, which will be inevitably reflected in external words and acts. Maximus states that acts of the body do not bring about virtue, but merely manifest it (*Amb.Io*. 5). For him, sin, the passions, and the virtues concern primarily the deeper aspects of the human soul.

Moreover, Maximus' understanding of the imitation of Christ is neither moralistic, nor superficial. As he writes in one of his *Epistles*, the person who imitates the virtues only superficially, while being in reality a friend of the passions, is in fact similar to a monkey who may imitate the morals of human beings while sharing nothing human (*Ep*. 20). For Maximus, one should not merely act as if one were holy, but one should become truly holy.

The ascetic struggle for the overcoming of passions is placed by Maximus within a sacramental framework. Maximus refers explicitly to the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist—one of his masterpieces, after all, is the *Mystagogy*, a magnificent interpretation of the Divine Liturgy. His combination of liturgical and ascetic theology foreshadows the great synthesis of Nicholas Cabasilas in the fourteenth century (De Catanzaro 1997).

Maximus' ascetic theology is also deeply biblical. The Bible does not suggest an 'easy' way of life. Asceticism and the war against both the demons and our own 'old self' (Rom. 6: 6; Eph. 4: 22; Col. 3: 9) are at the heart of its message. And the same applies to the great virtue of love. Love for God and for our fellow human beings is, for Maximus, the quintessence not only of Christ's life and commandments, but also of the ascetic life. Love for the self is the mother of all passions. Love for our enemies is the apex of holiness. Love—not knowledge—is for Maximus the cardinal virtue, just as self-love is the cardinal passion.

Finally, Maximus' ascetic theology is 'optimistic'. Without overlooking either the abyss of the human soul or the dark sides of human relationships, Maximus the Confessor shares a firm belief, based on his personal ascetic experience, in the transformative power of divine grace, which is received and made good use of by those who dedicate themselves to God and try to enter the kingdom through the narrow gate. The way of life he suggests is hard but achievable and salvific.

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Notes:

([1]) *Amb.Io*. 42 and 45; *Q.Thal*. 61; Thunberg 1995: 144–5; and Nichols 1993: 166–7.

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([2]) On pleasure and pain, see Völker 1965: 188–200 and especially Schönborn 1982. For more on Maximus' views on the Fall and original sin, see Larchet 1998: 77–124. For what follows, I draw heavily on Bathrellos 2006: 45–9.

([3]) For all passages from *LA* and *Car.*, I use Sherwood's translation (Sherwood 1995a), often slightly modified.

([4]) For the importance of γνώμη, see also *Ep*. 1, *Ep.* 3, and *Or.dom.*; cf. Laird 2015.

([5]) Cf. *Car.* 2. 8 and 3. 57; Hausherr 1952: 44–5.

([6]) Among Maximus' relevant sources, see Morani 1987 on Nemesius, and Portaru 2015 on Aristotelianism and Platonism.

([7]) For Evagrius, see Sinkewicz 2006; for Maximus' relation to him, Viller 1930.

([8]) Thunberg 1995: 267–78; Nichols 1993: 178–9; for resentfulness, envy, and slander, see also *Car*. 1. 55–61.

([9]) See also Thunberg 1995: 284–99 and Völker 1965: 183 and 201–22.

Demetrios Bathrellos

Demetrios Bathrellos is a priest in Athens, Greece. He teaches theology at the Hellenic Open University, Athens, and at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge.

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Christocentric Cosmology

Torstein T. Tollefsen

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Abstract and Keywords

The author describes Maximus' doctrine of Christ, the Logos of God, as the beginning and end of the divine Economy of creation and salvation, and shows how he corrects Origen. The following texts are basic to this description: *Amb.Io.* 7 and 41, *Q.Thal.* 60, and the first ten chapters of *Chapters on Knowledge*. The divine Economy is the eternal project of the Trinity. He then discusses some problems involved in Maximus' doctrine of the creation of a *temporal* world, with some comments on John Philoponus and Maximus as they defend Christian doctrine against neo-Platonism, and a focus on the *procession* and *conversion* of beings in relation to Christ. In a description of Maximus' Christocentrism, it is important to show how the created cosmos is divinely instituted as an *ontologically interconnected structure*: particulars, species, and genera are interconnected in accordance with the *logoi* as principles for the achievement of the universal glorification of beings.

Keywords: neo-Platonism, cosmology, divine Economy, creation, salvation, Christ, John Philoponus, Maximus, Origen, cosmos

IN the philosophical theology of Maximus, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, is understood as the metaphysical and ontological centre of the total cosmos.[1]

The term 'Christocentric cosmology' is meant to indicate that the whole history of the cosmos, of its beginning and end, and of its ontological constitution and purpose, has its centre in Christ, the Logos of God. This conception of the cosmos comprises therefore both Creation and salvation, conceived of as two phases of the one divine Economy. In this regard it is called the mystery of Christ. The one Logos is the source of all the *logoi* by the agency of which God is the paradigmatic and efficient as well as the final cause of all being. This idea of the Logos as source finds its expression in the image of the circle, its centre, radii, and circumference, in a striking conception of the world as a whole, comprising parts that also are wholes comprising further parts—parts mirror the wholes and vice versa, and in a doctrine of fulfilment as the recapitulation of all being in a glorified condition which is described in accordance with the 'logic' of Christology sanctioned by the Council of Chalcedon: without change, without confusion, without division, and without separation (but see Törönen 2007: 1–2). Within this scheme Maximus not only corrects the Origenist myth, but also works out a cosmology that is a Christian alternative to neo-Platonist metaphysics.

(p. 308) The Mystery of Christ

In his *Amb.Io.* 7, Maximus writes (PG 91. 1084C–D): 'For God's Logos and God wills always and in all to effect the mystery of his own Incarnation.' It is tempting to take this saying as referring to the historical Incarnation of Christ. However, it is not that simple. The 'always and in all' definitely signifies something more far-reaching. In *Amb.Io.* 33 (PG 91. 1285C–1288A) Maximus talks of three 'embodiments' (ἐνσωματώσεις) of Christ, that is, three 'incarnations', namely, in the cosmos, in scripture, and in the historical person of Jesus Christ. The divine Logos,

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therefore, is present in the cosmic building *before* the historical Incarnation. The 'always and in all' comprises, as we shall see, a kind of incarnational presence through certain metaphysical *principles* in the cosmic order of being, and furthermore a presence in the *meanings* of scripture; and finally, the fact that the person of the Logos through the hypostatic union took upon himself human nature. The mystery of Christ is the key to the meaning of these incarnations. We shall focus especially on the first and the third.

In *Q.Thal.* 60 Maximus writes on 'the mystery of Christ' in response to a question put to him by the abbot Thalassius. Maximus identifies this mystery as the hypostatic union between humanity and divinity in the one hypostasis of Christ, the Logos of God. He describes the union in accordance with the christological logic of the Council of Chalcedon. The hypostatic union, the Incarnation of God the Word, however, is not described solely as a single, contingent event in world history, but rather as 'that for which all things are ordained' (*Q.Thal.* 60, Laga–Steel 1990: 75). In other words, the whole of Creation is for the sake of the mystery of Christ, and this mystery is said to be the divine purpose (σκοπός) conceived before the beginning of created beings: 'In defining it we should say that this mystery is the preconceived goal for which everything exists, but which itself exists on account of nothing.' Maximus obviously has in mind here the Pauline vision of the recapitulation of everything in Christ (Eph. 1: 9–10). According to Maximus this mystery circumscribes the ages, the whole 'history' of the cosmos. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Maximus says, is the beginning, middle, and end of all the ages, of those that have been, that are now, and that shall come (*Q.Thal.* 22, Laga–Steel 1990: 139). This view of the cosmos, its origin, history, and purpose, is surprisingly radical: metaphysics and ontology, natural philosophy and cosmology, in this way become tied to a distinctive christological and soteriological perspective.

The divine plan for the cosmos pre-existed the ages and was conceived in God eternally (*Q.Thal.* 60, Laga–Steel 1990: 75). When there was as yet no world, no being, but God alone, God contemplated in Godself the whole world drama with Christ at its centre. In Maximus' view, this divine contemplation had a *trinitarian* character. In *Q.Thal.* 60 (Laga–Steel 1990: 79) he says: 'It was known to the Father by his approval, to the Son by his carrying it out, and to the Holy Spirit by his cooperation.' Against this background it could now be tempting to think that the Creation of this cosmos would be due to some kind of necessity: whatever God contemplates in Godself, as (p. 309) conceived within God's own being, this would follow as an immediate and necessary consequence of this contemplation. This argument had been one of the issues in John Philoponus' critique of Proclus (*De aeternitate mundi contra Proclum*, cf. Share 2004: 32–42). Maximus agrees with Philoponus, a Christian philosopher from Alexandria (although he does not mention him), and claims there is no necessity for the Creation of the cosmos. Creation is due to God's will, and this will is not acting from some kind of constraint, neither from within nor from without. Maximus says that, 'When the Creator willed, he gave being to and manifested the knowledge of beings that eternally existed in him' (*Car.* 4. 4, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 194). Maximus thinks that the world is created *recently* (προσφάτως, *Car.* 4. 4), which clearly shows that it originated from a free divine decision and not from any necessity. It is, of course, tempting to see this doctrine as a correction of pagan, neo-Platonist doctrines of Creation, and it probably is. However, if we try to penetrate the intricacies of divine will and the act of creation, neo-Platonists and Christians seem confronted with rather similar problems (cf. Tollefsen 2008: 40–63). Maximus argues in *Amb.Io.* 10 that everything except the Creator has a beginning. In one section he claims that everything that is in motion has both a beginning and an end between which it moves (PG 91. 1176D–1177B). However, Maximus does not address the problems connected with the doctrine of Creation at great length, but even so seems confident that they may be solved. Probably the figure of John Philoponus represented a watershed for Christian self-confidence in this regard: a doctrine that states the bringing of an eternal act of contemplation—as a divine capacity to create—into creative activity that establishes temporal reality out of nothing, is philosophically sound.

Maximus has what I would call a radical doctrine of divine transcendence. There are particularly a couple of places where this is presented in a rather striking way, namely in *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91. 1081B) and in the introduction to his *Myst.* (Boudignon 2011: 9–10). Maximus states that God and created being have no categories (probably categories of an Aristotelian kind) and no (transcendent) concepts (like being, goodness, etc.) in common.[2] In *Amb.Io.* 7 he says that what is determined by all categories and what is characterized by none cannot be conceived of as coexisting. In the introduction to the *Mystagogy*, he states that God and creatures cannot have the (transcendent) concept of being in common: in effect he argues that if God is being, beings *are* not, and if beings are, God *is* not. Of course, he does not deny the relative importance of *kataphatic* and *apophatic* theology. The first states positive predicates of God as the Creator of the world. The second denies such predicates since it

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searches for God in Godself. Even so, both procedures are of a limited value since, in the end, Maximus accepts the Dionysian principle that God transcends both kinds of predication (*Myst.* 5). The being of God cannot be fixed within predicative strategies, and Maximus says that the being of God (p. 310) has no contrary, not even non-being (cf. *Car.* 3. 27–8).[3] This radical transcendence, however, is no obstacle for Maximus to claim that God may freely accommodate Godself to what is other than God, and establish the created world. Maximus adheres to what by his time is the traditional Christian doctrine of Creation: (i) that God created out of nothing, (ii) because God willed so, and (iii) in such a way that created being had a temporal beginning a definite number of time-units ago.

The Image of the Circle

Maximus' doctrine of the mystery of Christ locates Christ, the divine Logos, at the centre of the divine Economy comprising both Creation and salvation. The idea is that the unity which God eternally wants to accomplish between Godself and creatures is focussed on the Logos who works out his Incarnation in the three ways mentioned above. The image of the circle, its centre, radii, and circumference is, as we shall see, well adapted to illustrate the cosmic centrality of Christ.

Maximus employs the image in at least three places, namely in *Th.oec.* 2. 4, *Amb.Io.* 7, and *Myst.* 1. Neo-Platonist philosophers like Plotinus and Proclus use the image in their metaphysics.[4] Maximus, however, probably found it in Ps-Dionysius.[5]

In *Th.oec.* (PG 90. 1125D–1128A), Maximus says: 'Just as straight lines that proceed from the centre are seen as totally undivided in that position, so the one who has been made worthy to be in God will recognize with a certain simple and undivided knowledge all pre-existing *logoi* of what has come into being in him.' The centre of the circle is an image of God and God may reasonably be understood to be the Logos as second hypostasis of the Trinity. The radii that stretch forth from this centre illustrate the pre-existing *logoi* of creatures. We shall return to the question of how these *logoi* function below. The chapter has an epistemic point as well, namely that a human being who is worthy may recognize these *logoi* in God. This probably refers to Maximus' doctrine of spiritual development, the second phase of which is so-called natural contemplation (cf. Tollefsen 2008: 184–9). The meaning of this phase is to contemplate beings not according to their outer and desirable aspect, but as founded on God, as in Proverbs: 'By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations …' (Prov. 3: 19)—the purpose of contemplation is to gain knowledge of this wisdom.

(p. 311) In *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91. 1081C), Maximus posits the image to highlight the saying that 'the one Logos is many *logoi*, and the many are one'. The one is many in its creative activity when there is manifested a 'procession (πρόοδος) that keeps [beings] together'. Beings are seen, in their making, figuratively speaking, as pouring forth from the Logos as from a source. But this movement from the source is not an arbitrary dispersal of beings. On the contrary, beings are kept together in a certain order. We shall return to this order in the section on 'whole and part' below. The other part of the saying, that the many *logoi* are one Logos, describes the conversion (ἐπιστροφή) of creatures to God: 'It is as if they were drawn to an all-powerful origin or centre (κέντρον) which anticipates the beginnings of the lines that go out from it and gathers them all together, in this way the many are one.' Like the procession, the conversion is also conceived of as well ordered, since it is described as 'providence that leads by the hand'. Procession and conversion set the limits of the created cosmos. Beings come forth from God and shall convert to God. The final purpose of the whole of being is a state of consummation or transfiguration. In the fulfilment of this purpose the effects of the hypostatic union are actualized in the deification of human beings and the cosmos, each in accordance with their fitness for achievement (Tollefsen 2008: 185–6, 217–18).

Of the two texts we have commented on so far, the first has a cosmological as well as a spiritual relevance. The second is mainly cosmological, but occurs within a context that has strong soteriological implications. The third text, *Myst.* 1 (Boudignon 2011: 13–14), is from Maximus' interpretation of the mystery of the church. His concern in chapter 1 is to show how the church is an image of God. The transcendent God is the unifying power in the cosmos and keeps beings in a well-ordered system of unity in plurality. The church, likewise, unifies people who differ in all kinds of aspects and makes them one as being baptized into Christ. Then he turns to a cosmological image which offers an illustration of how Christ as God encloses in Godself all things by one, simple, and infinitely wise power. Christ is the centre from which the principles of beings (ἀρχαὶ τῶν ὄντων) stretch forth like radii. These are kept within the circumference that circumscribes their extremity and are brought back to God like straight lines fastened

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to the centre. The image is obviously an illustration of how beings are made by God in accordance with certain principles (*archai* are probably identical with *logoi*), and of how divine Providence secures the being of beings by circumscribing them and protecting them from falling into non-being. Beings are secured, however, not just in the order of nature, but rather with a view to the consummation of beings in their transformation. The focus is therefore soteriological as well as cosmological. Christ is at the centre of the natural cosmos. This doctrine of the centrality of Christ is not just a piece of natural philosophy or metaphysics, but is to the same degree a soteriology.

In order to highlight further this idea of the centrality of Christ, I will turn to Maximus' doctrine of the Logos and the *logoi*.

(p. 312) The Logos and the *Logoi*

The *Logoi*

We have seen that the mystery of Christ is the Trinity's eternal plan for the Creation and salvation of created being. In order to make Maximus' Christocentric cosmology more specific, we turn now to his doctrine of the divine *logoi*. We have referred to the *logoi* in several places above, and now we have to ask what they are. We find an answer in *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91. 1077C–1085B). Maximus says that the *logoi* are the divine principles of creatures in accordance with which the difference and variety of things are secured (1077C). There are *logoi* of angels and beings of the higher world, of human beings, and of everything that receives its becoming from God (1080A). Maximus says further:

> The *logoi* of all things known by God before their creation are securely fixed in God. They are in God who is the truth of all things. Yet all these things, things present and things to come, have not been brought into being contemporaneously with their being known by God; rather each was created in an appropriate way according to its *logos* at the proper time according to the wisdom of the maker, and each acquired concrete actual existence in itself.
>
> (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1081A)

Maximus refers with approval to Dionysius who says the *logoi* are predeterminations (προορισμοί) and divine wills or acts of will (θεῖα θελήματα) (PG 91. 1085A; cf. Ps-Dionysius, *Div.nom.* 5. 8; Suchla 1990: 188). Maximus says God knows beings as acts of God's will (PG 91. 1085B).

We shall try to put these elements into a clearer picture. In one sense it seems obvious that what we have described above presents a doctrine of divine ideas. This is the way they are understood by, for instance, von Balthasar, who frequently translates *logos* as 'göttliche Idee' (von Balthasar 1961: 110–17). This is reflected in Daley's valuable translation (2003) of von Balthasar's book, where the term is 'idea'. Daley also uses the term 'intelligible principle' (von Balthasar 2003: 115–22). If we look to Maximus' examples above, there can be no doubt: the *logoi* are divine ideas for the different kinds of creatures. These ideas secure beings in their differentiated variety, each kind according to its own identity. The *logoi* determine beforehand, which means in God's eternal contemplation, what beings are to be according to their *essence*. God conceives these eternal patterns as *acts of God's will* in accordance with which God creates beings in such a way that they occur in the world at the proper time for each creature.[6]

(p. 313) However, taken this way, the *logoi* seem to be rather static patterns for the ontological constitution of beings through the act of creation. But this is just one aspect of the whole picture. Maximus makes each *logos* into a triad as *logos* of being, *logos* of well-being, and *logos* of eternal well-being (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1084B–C). Such triadic patterns make good sense in connection with intelligent creatures. In *Th.oec.* (1. 1–10, PG 90. 1084A–1088A) Maximus describes the ontological nature of beings (probably having intelligent creatures in mind) as structured by the triad essence–potentiality–actuality. If this text is compared with the description of the development of creatures in the direction of fulfilment and deification in *Amb.Io.* 7, we get the following picture: the *logos* of being defines the essential character of a being in such a way that it comprises a certain capacity or potentiality which may be actualized. If a being lives in accordance with this *logos* of being (κατὰ λόγον, cf. *Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1084B–C), its potential is actualized in accordance with its *logos* of well-being; and in the final consummation of its being, if the creature keeps on to its path, it receives deification in accordance with its *logos*

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of eternal well-being. This picture may be filled in through a closer examination of the relation between the Logos and the *logoi* and the Maximian doctrine of remaining–procession–conversion.

The Logos–*Logoi*

We have already touched upon the important text in *Amb.Io.* 7 where Maximus says that 'the one Logos is many *logoi*, and the many are one' (PG 91. 1081B–C). The context of this saying is an anti-Origenist polemic in which Maximus argues philosophically against what has been called the 'Origenist myth' (Sherwood 1955b: 72–102). The doctrine of *logoi* is here a part of his argumentative strategy.

The seventh *Amb.Io.* offers an orthodox interpretation of a section from Gregory the Theologian (*Or.* 14. 7, PG 35. 865C) where the following words are the most important: 'Is it God's intention that we who are a portion of God and have slipped down from above should out of self-importance be so haughty and puffed up as to despise our Creator?' Maximus criticizes Origenists who have taken this to refer to a pre-cosmic Fall from the unitary existence of intellects around God. Maximus objects that if an intellect in such a condition had really contemplated the truly beautiful, it would never fall from such contemplation. The words of the Theologian should not then be interpreted as to support a doctrine of a pre-cosmic Fall. According to Maximus, Gregory is right, however, since creatures are portions of God, but that is because their *logoi* pre-exist in God. Creatures may also be said to 'have slipped down from above' since this means that they do not live in accordance with their *logoi* in God. Maximus' arguments against the Origenists seems philosophically sound to me.

The doctrine of *logoi* is therefore an aspect of the orthodox refutation of the kind of Origenism dissected by Maximus in this text. However, he also achieves something more. Since he sets in play not only traditional Christian concepts and terminology, but also addresses his topic by using conceptual tools and terms from neo-Platonism, his **(p. 314)** exposition offers a Christian alternative to neo-Platonist philosophy as well. There is no doubt about it: in Maximus the Confessor the Christian tradition has brought forth an intellect that matches the philosophers of the schools.

'The one Logos is many *logoi* and the many *logoi* are One' (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1081B). In Maximus' time it was a tradition among Christian thinkers to call certain divine principles '*logoi*'. There is no need to document this legacy in every detail, but Origen (in *Princ.* 1. 2. 2, von Görgemanns–Karpp 1976: 126) had already said that Wisdom contained within herself the *initia, rationes*, and *species* of the whole creation. The original Greek in all probability had ἀρχαί, λόγοι, and εἴδη here. According to Rist (1980: 85–6), in the philosophy of the neo-Platonist Plotinus, the *logoi* are principles that carry the Forms from the realm of the mind to the level of matter. The term is put to use in cosmological theories both in the philosophical schools and in Christian circles. However, the Christian use of the term is, of course, facilitated by the prologue of the Gospel of John: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1: 1). The third verse states the Word's involvement in the making of the world: 'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' (John 1: 3). If this is combined with words like the following, the way towards a doctrine of the divine economy of Creation and salvation focussed on the Logos and his *logoi* seems straight forward: 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together' (Col. 1: 15–17; cf. Rom. 11: 36). When the Logos is understood as the medium of creation and the agent of salvation, and as centre of a philosophical cosmology and soteriology, it is a natural development that certain creative principles are associated with the Logos, and that these are called *logoi*.

However, the origin or formation of the term is one thing; the ontological sense that may be accommodated by such terminology is another. When the Logos–Christ makes a particular creature in accordance with his *logos*, this indicates a distinctive relationship between the Logos–Christ and the creature. The creative *logos* is, probably, an expression of the Logos–Christ himself and stamps the resulting creature with the image of the prototype. This must be the meaning of the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Logos in the natural world: he leaves his traces there. The Logos–Christ establishes in this way creatures in relation to himself as their natural beginning and end, even if he, as the second person of the Trinity, transcends being. These relations may be highlighted if we turn to the doctrine of remaining–procession–conversion.

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Remaining–Procession–Conversion

According to Sherwood, Maximus replaces the heretical Origenist triad of abiding–movement–becoming (μονή–κίνησις–γένεσις) with the orthodox triad becoming–movement–rest (γένεσις–κίνησις–στάσις) (Sherwood 1955b: 92–3). The cosmic drama, (p. 315) according to Maximus, does not begin with intellects that remain in contemplation, that next fall to movement, with the result that the world is created. Rather it begins with becoming or creation, followed by creaturely movement, and finally with rest in God. This is a summary of the main points in Maximus' critique of Origenism. However, there is one thing that could be missed if one focusses on these structures only. There is something more at work in the seventh *Amb.Io*. This 'more', however, is not any metaphysical structure added to the anti-Origenist triad. Maximus, in fact, does not only present polemical arguments. He presents the features of a worldview that is richer than just a pure critique of Origenism, and, as was said above, this amounts to a real Christian alternative to the philosophy of the schools. In this regard, Maximus really fulfills the Christian cultural battle with paganism, since in him—as in John Philoponus of Alexandria before him—pagan philosophy meets its match.

In Maximus' thought, the triad becoming–movement–rest is supplemented with the triad procession–conversion–rest. The terms 'procession' and 'conversion' are known from neo-Platonist philosophy. They are connected to a similar triad remaining–procession–conversion that plays a basic role in neo-Platonist cosmology (Tollefsen 2012: 21.31). All generation starts with the higher hypostasis remaining in itself. As it remains in itself, it executes an external activity that gives rise to the hypostatic level 'below' in the scale of being. The external activity is the procession, and procession accounts for the difference between the cause and the effect. But as it proceeds, the new entity is not yet complete. It becomes complete and fulfilled as it converts to its cause. This is a simple description of the complex causal mechanism of the system of Plotinus. We find something similar in Proclus, with his famous saying that 'every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and converts to it'. The Proclean version of the doctrine is important, since it is probably behind the causal schemes applied by Dionysius, and Maximus might have come to know it from that source.

In *Amb.Io.* 7, Maximus obviously presents a doctrine of 'divine remaining' similar to what one finds in neo-Platonist systems. As I have already pointed out, he interprets Gregory's 'portion of God' as the *logoi* of all things that pre-exist in God (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1081C). These *logoi* must be the same as God's eternally pre-existing knowledge of beings (*Car.* 4. 4, PG 90. 1048D). This original remaining is not the Origenistic one of all intelligences around God. No particular beings may co-exist with God from eternity. It is rather the remaining of all beings in God's *contemplation* of their principles, that is, the remaining of beings in their *logoi*.

The procession is the act of creation. As in neo-Platonism, the procession accounts for the ontological difference between God and creatures, a difference that in fact is a chasm. Beings are created otherness, not of a semi-divine character. To be created in accordance with their *logos* of being, which is the divine act of will that brings creatures from non-being into being, means that creatures are brought forth as *relatively* complete entities. However, beings are, in a sense, not perfect just by being created within the natural order: they have to confirm their relation to the paradigm of their *logos*. As we saw above, creatures are not just natural essences occurring in the world. Because of their (p. 316) essential being they comprise within themselves a potential for movement. When this is actualized in the proper way, beings enter the condition in which they receive deification from God (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1084A–D).

When Maximus writes about the way to deification, he mainly has intelligent creatures in mind. It is on the peak of conversion that beings are perfected to their utter limit and even beyond. In *Myst.* 5 Maximus says (Boudignon 2011: 23–4): 'He [i.e. Christ] restores me in a marvellous way to myself, or rather to God from whom I received being and towards whom I am directed, long desirous of achieving well-being.' To be restored to oneself or 'rather to God' probably means to exist in accordance with the divine idea or *logos* of what a particular human being was meant to be. In *Amb.Io.* 7 Maximus shows that to be a 'portion of God' is not only to be made according to a *logos* in God, but also to move into one's proper identity in God (cf. *Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1080B–C). And God, the Logos, is the truth (ἀλήθεια) of all things, namely their real 'self' (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1081A). Here we should remember that uncreated and created being cannot be mixed together and that Maximus fixes the limit between them in accordance with Chalcedonian 'logic'. Further, to have one's own self in Christ means that one has one's *logos* in Christ, a *logos* that contains the idea of being this particular human hypostasis when it moves naturally according to the triadic pattern of its *logos*. There is a similarity here with neo-Platonism in that a being is fulfilled or

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constituted as itself only when it converts to its source.

This doctrine of conversion along the 'radius' of the *logos* towards the centre, is, as I said above, mainly a description of the purpose of *rational* beings. However, Maximus describes the cosmic fabric in a way that shows he has something more than this in mind. Maximus' Christocentric cosmology includes the totality of created beings. It is not only rational beings that have their *logoi* in God, but all beings are made according to such *logoi*. The whole manifold cosmos, therefore, is centred in Christ, and one might wonder whether this same whole, as described in accordance with the same set of metaphysical principles, is destined to transcend the limits of corruption. This brings us to Maximus' sophisticated doctrine of whole and part.

Whole and Part

Maximus' philosophy of whole and part is an intricate matter. It is about the totality of the cosmos and the way it is structured as a unity-in-plurality. The principle of this unity is, of course, Christ. Gregory of Nyssa is probably one of the sources behind Maximus' special reflection on this topic (cf. *Opif.* 16. 16–18, PG 44. 185A–D).

In Euclid's *Elements* book 1, there is a list of five common notions, sometimes called axioms. The fifth axiom states (Thomas 1980: 445): 'The whole is greater than the part.' This may be explained in the following way: A>B means that there is some C such that A = B + C. This would be a mathematical way of conceiving the whole and part relation. This, however, is not how Maximus understands it. In his philosophy, the whole/part (p. 317) relation is primarily of an ontological kind, and he applies it in a way we may call *holomeristic*.[7] *Holomerism* (from Greek ὅλος, 'whole', and μέρος, 'part') denotes here a relation in which each part of a whole is wholly what the whole is, while it at the same time differs from other parts of the same whole.

Maximus describes the cosmos as a whole comprising parts that in turn are wholes comprising parts, down to the level of particular beings that are simply parts. This is the way Maximus thinks of the universal (καθόλου). Christ, the Logos, is the principle of this arrangement, and Maximus says Christ holds together the universals of beings by the power of wisdom, and embraces the complementary parts by the prudence of understanding (*Amb.Io.* 41, PG 91. 1313A–B). I do not think Maximus wants us to see Christ as the highest universal, but rather as the *principle* behind all distribution of wholes and parts (but cf. Perl 1991: 169). Christ as principle is here the Logos–*logoi* structure we have met above (cf. *Amb.Io.* 41, PG 91. 1312B–1313B). Maximus describes this arrangement rather dynamically when he says that being or essence (οὐσία) itself is moved by expansion and contraction (διαστολή and συστολή) (*Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1177B–1180A). Essence is moved by expansion from the 'most generic genus' through the 'more generic genera' down to the species and the 'most specific species'. The contractive movement is the other way around, from bottom to top. While the downward movement is distributive of plurality and diversity, the contractive movement is unifying. Both movements are presented as making up a well-ordered cosmos. I think there is good reason to believe that a source of inspiration behind this arrangement—to which we find allusions in several passages in Maximus' writings—is the so-called Porphyrian tree. However, I do not believe that Maximus, in his divisions of being and his philosophy of whole and part (the universal), simply intends to reproduce such a kind of arrangement (cf. Tollefsen 2008: 81–92 and Törönen 2007: 138–41).

It is immediately tempting to interpret this 'movement' more or less literally and to conceive of Maximus' system as a kind of Platonism, operating with levels of intelligible beings that emanate from God, between God and the particulars, but I think this is premature. What we have looked into is just one text that definitely has to be supplemented by other texts, for the subject occupies him in several connections. In *Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1177B–1180A is one of many such sections that culminate in a definition of providence (e.g. PG 91. 1188C–1193C, a particularly important passage). If this is supplemented with *Amb.Io.* 41 (PG 91. 1312B–1313B), we get a rather fuller picture.

What Maximus describes is a cosmos that embodies a certain order of being. His wholes or universals are not what one would usually hold such structures to be, namely mental entities or abstract thoughts in the mind of the thinker, something we could arrange as a Porphyrian tree. The wholes (or universals) and the parts are arrangements of the real world, but not Platonic entities 'between' God and non-being. The arrangements comprise all that is made by God, intelligible as well as sensible beings. Every (p. 318) whole has parts. These parts may also be wholes of parts. The system begins at the top with the most inclusive genus and ends at the bottom in species that contain individuals as parts that cannot be further naturally divided. If the individuals suffer division they are simply

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destroyed. Each part fills the whole completely so that each of the many entities that belong to a genus is completely what the genus is. Parts, Maximus says, converge towards the whole, and there is unity throughout the wholes with the parts (*Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1188D–1189A).

To make this system more concrete, we may say that Peter and Paul are each of them human beings in the whole of their being even if they differ because of distinctive properties. Peter and Paul are likewise, because they are humans, animals in the whole of their being even if they differ from other animals because of distinctive properties. Further, Peter and Paul, because they are animals, are—to jump to the highest essential determination—creaturely beings in the whole of their being even if they differ from other creatures because of distinctive properties. And all these essential features are located within the being of the particular, but make it possible to establish relationships throughout the whole kingdom of creatures, relationships that are potentially available because creatures are made to converge in peace and harmony in the direction of the Logos, not as the highest universal but as the hypostatic Son of God, the centre of all that is made.

Each genus is constituted by the genus above it plus a generic difference. In this way 'animal', for instance, may be defined as ensouled entity (the genus above it) with the power of sensation (the difference). 'Human being' may be defined as animal (genus) with reason (difference). The genus is present as a whole to each of its parts, without being split up by its parts. A part is wholly what its genus is.

This system does not suppress plurality and diversity, despite its emphasis on unification. Maximus is eager to keep the balance between differentiation and unification. Particulars are the basic ontological entities, but even so universals are fundamental as well (cf. *Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1189C–1192A). God willed the plurality and diversity (creation and distribution), but God also wills the harmony and unity among beings (conversion and contraction). The system of whole and part lays the ontological foundation for such unity-in-plurality.

This metaphysical arrangement of the world has important practical implications in many of Maximus' writings on different topics, from dogmatic issues to spirituality. For instance, in his *Or.dom.* (Van Deun 1991: 55) Maximus comments on Colossians 3: 11: 'Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.' Maximus stresses the singularity of nature, which shall not be split up by particularizing acts of will that introduce unnatural activities and split the basic unity of humankind. It is interesting to compare this with what Gregory of Nyssa writes, for instance, in his *Homilies on Ecclesiastes* (*Homiliae in Ecclesiastes,* McDonough and Alexander 1986: 334–6; Hall 1993: 73–4). Maximus has turned Gregory's idea of the whole of human nature into a piece of systematic metaphysics.

The texts we commented on above stress that human beings, although identical according to (specific) nature, are different in their particular properties. These differences do (p. 319) not have to culminate in tensions and enmity, but should rather mutually enrich human beings. However, whether the result is enmity or harmony depends on the exercise of will. *Myst.* 1 illustrates what we are discussing now (Boudignon 2011: 11). God has ordered the world providentially by providing the principles of an 'unconfused identity of movement and existence'. Because of their relationship to God, the relations between created entities may be harmonized by a good development in which parts fit into their wholes until the whole cosmos is unified in God. The Christ–Logos is the basic principle of creation and, by his *logoi,* he has laid the foundation for creatures to realize the divine purpose of union with one another and with God.

Unity in Christ

The world-order is founded for the achievement of the divine purpose, but since humankind fell into sin, the completion of the divine economy is in the hands of the Trinity itself. As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, the mystery of Christ is the mystery of the hypostatic union in which divine and human nature and activity come together in an unconfused way, without being divided. (For the dynamic union in Christ, cf. *Amb.Th.* 5). The purpose is the deification of humankind. In *Amb.Io.* 41 Maximus describes the divine intervention as a recapitulation of *all being* in Christ. We may wonder, when we talk of 'all being', what is included and what is excluded? Maybe one finds the question strange? Should not 'all' be 'all'? But what about my dog, the flowers in my garden, butterflies, the worm crawling on the earth? In short, what has this beautiful piece of advanced theological and metaphysical speculation to say about the sensible world we live in? From the way Maximus presents his cosmic view, the way he stresses the microcosmic and mediator role of human beings, which is fulfilled in Christ as

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the real centre of the cosmos, one gets the impression that nothing is excluded, except corruptibility and sin. When Maximus speaks of 'beings', he mentions the intelligible creation, but he focusses on human beings. He never says explicitly that animals, vegetation, natural elements, and minerals have any place in the soteriological scheme. However, the way he contemplates the world in its divine roots (the *logoi*), arranged as it is, to use a metaphor, in concentric circles of *genera* with the centre of all being in the Christ–Logos, it seems in principle impossible that any being at all is wasted. All being, and that means all *beings*, particulars, species, and *genera*, are included in the temporal order instituted by God. But this order is not some kind of theatrical show of just temporary value. This created whole of intelligible as well as sensible things is essential in the divine Economy. The creation of this kind of world, in all its sumptuous variety, even if fallen to corruption, is not made to be annihilated, but rather to participate in the universal transfiguration and glorification. The whole logic, the ontological structure Maximus has described, surely indicates this. Even if Maximus does not address such questions explicitly, a definite answer surely follows from the principles of his system.

Suggested Reading

The term 'Christocentric cosmology' was coined as the title of my thesis defended at the University of Oslo in 2000, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor* (published in OECS, 2008). Some of the most important scholarly sources of inspiration behind this work were von Balthasar (1961), Sherwood (1955b), Thunberg (1985 and 1995), and Perl (1991). Other contributions of importance for Maximian cosmology are Louth (1996) and Törönen (2007).

General knowledge of late-antique philosophy is very useful when one tries to understand Greek patristic thought in general and Maximus in particular. In this connection I would like to recommend the valuable contributions made by Sorabji (1983, 1988, 2004), and his editorship of the *Ancient Commentators on Aristotle*.

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Notes:

(1) I should like to thank Paul M. Blowers, Vladimir Cvetkovic, and Jon Wetlesen for valuable comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

(2) The term transcendent concept (also called 'transcendental') belongs to mediaeval philosophy, but is useful here. It characterizes a concept that is more basic than the Aristotelian categories, e.g. being, goodness, beauty, etc.

(3) Putting it this way, Maximus wants to stress the transcendence of God. However, he should have to admit that this commits him to at least one positive proposition concerning God: God has no contrary except for the contrary that, contrary to all other things, God has no contrary. Since there is an inconsistent self-reference hiding in such a proposition, it would seem that the only way to gain consistency is to be quiet. At this point the way from radical apophaticism to the practice of hesychastic stillness is short.

(4) Cf. for instance *Enn.* 1. 7. 1, Armstrong 1966–88, vol. 1: 270–1; *Enn*. 5. 1. 11, vol. 5: 48–51; cf. Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, Steel 2009: 1160–4.

(5) Cf. *Div.nom.* 2.5, Suchla 1990: 128–9, and *Div.nom.* 5.5–9, Suchla 1990: 183–9.

(6) The notion that the divine *logoi* may specify a proper time for each creature may be a fruitful point of departure for discussions of whether this metaphysics could be adjusted to leave room for modern theories like the doctrine of evolution.

(7) I borrow the term *holomerism* from Wyller 1981: 229, who uses it in his particular form of Platonism. I borrow the term, not the content, of Wyller's description, even if there may be some slight similarities.

Torstein T. Tollefsen

Torstein T. Tollefsen is professor of philosophy at the University of Oslo (Norway) in the Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas.

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Eschatology in Maximus the Confessor

Andreas Andreopoulos

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Abstract and Keywords

Maximus struggled with the question of apocatastasis as it was known since the time of Origen, but did not address the concept of the time of God, or time beyond time, or the eighth day, only in a linear way. Instead, he reframed the question and examined it in a different context. Rather than place the dwelling of the soul in God at the end of linear time, he placed the end of time at the union of the soul and God. Maximus approached eschatology in relation to personal and ecclesial salvation and union with God, connecting it with protology, the time before time, and also exploring it in a mystagogical way. Although he considered the eschaton, the Second Coming of Christ and the time of God from many points of view, it is perhaps in his liturgical writings that we can find the clearest exposition of his eschatology.

Keywords: apocatastasis, eschaton, eschatology, mystagogy, salvation, ecclesial salvation, Origen, Second Coming, Christ

THE expectation of an imminent second coming of Christ, which we often find in early Christianity, was gradually replaced by a different eschatological discourse. In the thought of Maximus the Confessor we find a much more mature perspective on eschatology. In several of the works of the Confessor we see a particular interest in the eschaton. Maximus does not address the issue of the time of God, or time beyond time, or the eighth day, in a linear way, but reframes the question and examines it in a different context. Rather than place the dwelling of the soul in God at the end of linear time, he places the end of time at the union of the soul and God. Maximus approaches eschatology in relation to personal and ecclesial salvation, and union with God; he connects it with protology, the time before time, and also explores it in a mystagogical way. Although he considers the end of time and the time of God from many points of view, it is perhaps in his liturgical writings that we can find the clearest exposition of his eschatology, in the form of a realized eschatology.

As a particular topic in eschatological questions, Maximus reflected on the theological strand of the apokatastasis hypothesis. The idea of universal salvation, part of the legacy of Origen, is a scandal if it is approached as inevitability. Nevertheless, the ‘honourable silence’ with which Maximus treated such questions suggests that he distanced himself from a simplistic approach and recognized the contentious issue as a meaningful mystery. Finally, the way he approaches Pentecost demonstrates that the visitation of the Holy Spirit allows us to transcend historical time and pass from the existence that is limited by our created nature to the time of God.

Introduction—the Background

The question of the last things and the end of time has been part of the Christian tradition from the beginning. Already in the generation of the apostles, in the Pauline (p. 323) epistles, and in the Gospels we come across the anticipation of the Second Coming of Jesus and the end of time. The earliest sources express both fear and longing. This is expressed in images of destruction, desolation, and suffering, as we find in the ‘Little Apocalypse’

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of the synoptics (Mark 13; Matt. 24; and Luke 21), or the separation of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25), but also the way St. Paul speaks about it in 1 Corinthians 4: 2, 1 Thessalonians 4–5, and several other passages, which allude to the nature of the judgement of God.

The apostolic Fathers likewise held on to the idea of the imminence of the kingdom of God (for a comprehensive study, see Daley 2003). Nevertheless, it is difficult to tell exactly how this eschatological imagery was understood. Most scholars (Adrahtas 2005; Zoumboulakis 2011; Daley 2007; Rowland 2007; Kalaitzidis 2013) agree that such passages reflect an almost imminent anticipation of the Second Coming. Yet St. Paul, who is one of the greatest and most influential sources for Christian eschatology, discourages this attitude when he writes to the Thessalonians for a second time, even if it certainly seems that he had excited their anticipation previously. First it will be useful to look into the early writings that express this anticipation and query whether the meaning of this very real and very imminent second coming of God is the same as we usually attach to it now.

Early Writings on the Second Coming

The Book of Revelation is the most influential source for all modern forms of millenarianism, and yet its influence among the Fathers is surprisingly slight—after all it was not read liturgically, and many of the Fathers who wrote extensive exegetical works, such as John Chrysostom, ignored it completely. That said, although it can be said to reflect the eschatological views of the first generation of Christians, the various methodologies that can be used to read it lead to very different conclusions as to how it could be interpreted and when or how the end of days is understood there—whether in a literal, historical sense, or in a liturgically symbolic way, or, most likely, in both.

Although the end of days was discussed in several ancient sources, it is not clear whether the eschatological narrative was understood as the *linear* end of *all* history or in any other way. The question becomes clearer when we consider how time, in general, is understood in biblical sources. Unlike several ancient cultures with a cyclical idea of time (such as we find in Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius, for instance, even if it can be argued that cyclical time was only one component of their historiography), in the Hebrew tradition we find a very definite past, a moment of creation, and a point of no return—the expulsion from Paradise, which did not come with a hope for a return to it someday, despite the Protevangelion of Genesis 3: 15. Time in the Hebrew tradition, therefore, is linear, and it flows in one direction only (for a discussion of the Greek and Hebrew views of cyclical and linear time, see Boman 1970: 123–83).

(p. 324) When the Christian tradition introduced the idea of the kingdom of Heaven and the return to God—even if this did not mean a return to the naivety of the pre-lapsarian condition—the sense of the return to an earlier ontological state challenged this idea: the linearity of time was not as clearly dominant as before. It is true that history was still defined by a distinct past and a distinct future (made known to us through divine revelation), but the hope of returning to God and the idea of an existence after the end of history introduced a different understanding of time. If there is an existence after the 'last days', after the cosmic clock has stopped as it were, then perhaps we can think of an existence that is not bound to time or space, and for this reason it does not need to exist 'before' or 'after' linear history. Nevertheless, Christianity never challenged completely the linearity of time: while the kingdom of God may be beyond time, and therefore is not defined by linearity and progression (which Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus tried to express by the paradoxical image of the ever-moving rest, ἐπέκτασις),[1] the struggle towards it, the trajectory from our fallen state of sinfulness to the kingdom, may usually be understood as a linear quest. We start from a certain ontological condition, defined by the limitations of time and space, and through participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we hope to escape these limitations. This scheme, put in this way, has a distinct origin and a distinct destination.

Origen was among the first theologians to attempt to articulate clear answers, responding to several difficult theological questions that challenged Christianity from within and without. His speculative theology set the scene and the vocabulary for many generations of intellectual theologians after him. Origen brought into Christianity a certain idea about time which was not easily going to be compromised with the biblical tradition. In *On First Principles,* he shared the belief in a distinct origin in the past (consistent with the narrative of Creation), but he left the end of historical linearity open, not fixed into an irreversible finality, and therefore possibly leading to a cycle of new beginnings and ends. This idea did not appear in a vacuum: we can find the cyclical idea of time in ancient Greek culture, even if the question of the linearity of time did not play a great role in the life of most people. This

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question had to do with a long-term view that exceeded even the plane of the gods, rather than with everyday life. When we come across it, it either echoes much older ideas, or the views of eastern cultures that passed into Greek thought. Hesiod however, in his *Works and Days*, describes the successive ages of humans, the ages of gold, silver, bronze, the age of heroes, and the iron age, the one in which he thought he lived (Hesiod, *Op.*, Solmsen 1990: 109–201). This in itself does not say anything about cyclical time or linearity, and yet, after he deplores the condition of humanity in the iron age, he writes that he wishes he had died before it, or that he had been born after it. The expectation of a better age after the present one is often (p. 325) taken as a reflection of cyclical time, since what we see in the past is a gradual decline, and every age is worse than the one that preceded it.

Plato's theory of the cyclical relationship between the body and the soul, which he developed in *Phaedo*, may more accurately reflect the beliefs of the ancient Greek world, being much more influential on the theological categories of nascent Christianity than the views of Hesiod. In this dialogue, Socrates describes the cycle of birth, life, death, the state of the disembodied and all-knowing soul, and then again new birth, life, and so forth. Nevertheless, what he posits here is not necessarily an eternally repeating cyclical pattern. In *Phaedo*, as well as in other dialogues, Plato also describes the movement of the soul towards God. The combination of the two movements of the soul would be more appropriately described as an ascending spiral. At any rate, while this dialogue does not assume the cosmological dimensions of the ages of Hesiod or even Plato's own *Timaeus*, it discusses the cyclical pattern at the level of the soul, which would also become a challenge for Christian theology. The *Phaedo* is perhaps the first attempt to combine linear and cyclical time, and it is only much later that we find similar attempts. Maximus, likewise, combines cyclical and linear time, albeit in a different way.

To return to Origen, his cosmological model tried to combine the biblical narrative of the distinct origin of the universe, the distinct (yet not necessarily final) direction towards the kingdom of God, the Platonic division between the sensible and the ideal, and the different steps and states of the soul on its way towards God. Of course, as very few of the original writings of Origen have survived, we cannot be completely sure about his spiritual and theological system, although we can safely assume that some of his more difficult ideas (the ones more difficult to reconcile with mainstream Christianity) were influential for centuries after his death.[2] Nevertheless, his speculative theology and his spirit of intellectual exploration allowed many of the ideas of the Greek world to enter the Christian tradition. Although he was preceded by Philo in the convergence of the Greek and the biblical strand, Philo, as a writer in the Hebrew tradition, has no interest in eschatology (at least in the biblical sense) and therefore the introduction of these themes can be rightfully attributed to Origen (Wolfson 1982: 115–38).

Maximus on Restoration

By the time of Maximus, the experiential context of the average Christian lay person, as well as of the monk, had changed significantly since the time of Origen. The Christian life was more specific, more crystallized in its doctrines and its practices, both in the monastery and in the parish, after the consolidation of the christological and trinitarian doctrines in the first four ecumenical councils, and after the consolidation of the (p. 326) power of the bishops since the fourth century. Naturally, this also prompted theologians to explore the depth of the Christian life, its rituals, its worship, and its sacramental practices more thoroughly. It can be argued that the liturgical tradition was formed as a response to the great heresies of the fourth century—and it is true that many of the texts that are still in use today bear the signs of such controversies. The connection between liturgy and doctrine is very strong, especially when we remember that many of the people who were involved in the theological disputes of the time were also involved in the shaping of common worship, such as Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom. The liturgical expansion in the fourth century, in turn, urged people such as Ps-Dionysius to connect the theology of the ascent of the soul towards God with the imagery of the ascent of the priest to the altar, or the ranks of the angelic world with the rites and the sacraments of the church (Golitzin 1994). Maximus inherited this liturgical, theological language from Ps-Dionysius, and he developed it further, most famously in his *Mystagogy* (Louth 1993, 2004), but also elsewhere in his work.

It has been necessary here to examine some of the early Christian views on eschatology and linearity to show that the thought and contribution of Maximus did not appear in a vacuum, but followed and developed further many of these views. Although the church as an institution had changed significantly since the third century, and although the christological concerns of the seventh century had, likewise, moved on to nuance differently the balance between the human and the divine in Christ, the categories of theological thought that were essentially defined by

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Origen were still relevant. However, while we may look to such intellectual strands as one of the contributing factors in the formation of Maximus' theological views, other factors, such as the ascetic tradition and its influence, or the liturgical experience, are also important. Both of them had also developed significantly by the time Maximus was forming his theological views.

The thought of Maximus moves, unsurprisingly, through all these strands. Nevertheless, what makes his analyses interesting is that, whether he is discussing Origenist philosophy, Old Testament typology, or Ps-Dionysian liturgical theology, his thought is not carried away by the force that is particular to them. Instead, he reaches beyond the language or the particular symbolism in order to find its deeper spiritual significance. In other words, his thought does not depend on and is not generated by the particular wisdom that may be associated with any one of the theological fields. This is something that we can see, for example, in the way he discusses the significance of Pentecost.

The basic cosmological model of Origen in *On First Principles*, which discusses the creation and fall of the *logikoi* and the creation of the universe as events that are connected with each other, dominated Christian theology—even if indirectly—for centuries. Origen echoing both Greek thought and the Hebrew tradition, for both of which the perfect age could only be found in the distant past (in the age of the Gods or in paradise before the Fall), visualizes the beginning as a time of balance, perfection, and rest (see Andreopoulos 2004). Then, there is a first creation: God creates the *logikoi*, rational creatures that participate in God through the Logos. However, there comes a time when the *logikoi* are satiated, turn their attention away from God, and start moving (p. 327) away from God. As they move away, they undergo an ontological change: by 'cooling off', they become souls (here Origen follows the kind of creative etymology that is usual in Greek thought, ancient and modern, by connecting the words ψῦχος and ψυχή), and fall. God creates the universe in order to stop their fall away from God. The created world operates as a place of repentance (a cosmological boot camp, as it were), so that the souls will once again turn their attention to, and return to, God.

The whole scheme is given in the triad rest–movement–creation, referring to rest (the initial condition of balance), movement (away from God), and creation (of the world). Origen, like many neo-Platonists, likes to use triads, and he chooses to summarize the whole thing in three steps. A more detailed outline of his cosmological drama, however, would consist of six steps: rest (the initial balance), first creation (of the *logikoi*), movement (away from God), second creation (of the world), movement (away from physical creation and towards God), and second rest (equal to the first one). In a typically neo-Platonic manner, Origen thinks that the purpose of the created world is the return of all the souls to God. The triad rest–movement–creation is the opening act, and it shows his interest in the transition between life in paradise and life in the fallen world. The scheme follows the trajectory of the soul, while the body and the created world are not included in the first or in the last rest. In addition, the descent of the soul to matter, or rather its capture by matter, echoes strongly the Platonist view of the body as a limitation or, rather, as the tomb of the soul. The universe is something external to God and to the creatures whom God wants to love. Origen's eschatology therefore remains unambiguously dualistic, and the only way to resolve the tension between body and soul is the destruction of the body (Louth 2007: 51–72).

Maximus inherits this cosmological narrative as a template from the past that allows him to develop his own insights. Nevertheless, he approaches this narrative differently from Origen: here we can see a shift of interest in the history of Christian theology. To begin with, he is not satisfied with the open-ended Origenist scheme, and with the weak understanding of the second 'rest', which allows for the possibility of the whole process happening all over again. For Maximus, the end is not the same as the beginning, at least when we speak about this particular end and beginning. He criticizes Origen's idea of rest in *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91. 1081A, C, 1084B; see Blowers 1992) while he tries to explore what this rest might mean and how it could be understood.

For Christianity, the future (the kingdom of God) is more important than the past. It is in the eschatological future when things will be revealed (more completely than in the garden of paradise), and in a paradoxical manner it is the future that gives meaning to things of this age. This was a revolution within religious thought, because for the first time perfection became something anticipated rather than something remembered. Therefore, the destination becomes more important than the origin. The challenge is how to describe that end in such a way that the timelessness and the freedom of God are not reduced to a point in time. The problem Maximus faces here is that the eschaton cannot be an inert finality, an end in the return towards God—not if the way to understand this leads to a balance which includes the possibility of satiety, as was the case with the first condition of rest according to

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Origen. In this he follows (p. 328) Gregory of Nyssa and his doctrine of the eternal progression (ἐπέκτασις), the continuous ascent towards God, although the initial idea is habitually ascribed to St. Paul's 'from glory to glory' (2 Cor. 3: 18).

Therefore, the first concern of Maximus was to understand the dynamic, yet permanent, state of the final return to God. One of the problems in the Origenist view of the initial rest is that the *logikoi* were satiated from sharing in the life of God, and turned their attention away from God. This implies that in the first rest there was a certain potential for expansion, which could not be fulfilled within God—as if God's ability to keep the interest of the *logikoi* was finite and exhaustible. This is indeed a strange way to interpret the narrative of the Fall, but this is perhaps inevitable since Origen starts with a(n almost) perfect state in the beginning. What solves the problem for Maximus is that the final condition of rest, as he understands it, is not the same as the first rest, but it includes and it accommodates continuous movement. This movement, which is symptomatic of the created nature, as it reflects a trajectory of desire (to acquire what it does not have or to become what it is not), is a cause of the Fall in Origen, but a cause of ascent in Maximus. The final rest then includes eternal movement, but it is nevertheless a permanent condition, where it is possible to move only toward God, and not away. The brilliant paradoxical expression, 'ever-moving rest',[3] describes precisely this dynamic permanence which allows the creatures to continue their movement towards the infinity of God, without ever exhausting it.

The triad that Maximus uses instead of the Origenist rest–movement–creation is actually the reverse, creation–movement–rest. For Maximus, the stage of creation is not completed until the completion of the world, even if it includes other stages within it. Therefore, the first stage does not reflect the perfection of the past, as it does with Origen, but merely the endowment of the divine ἔρως to the creatures that God created, so that they may wish to move toward God. On the other hand, the final rest is not leading to a disembodied, abstract realm, but it includes created nature. Likewise, the eternal movement towards God involves the entire human being—not just soul or body, but the human being as the union of the two. The anthropology of Maximus, which is strongly non-dualist, is not annulled by his eschatology (Loudovikos 2013).

Movement, as we see, exists in some way from the beginning to the end. The universe has included movement, from its beginning. The end also includes movement, in the ever-moving rest. However, unlike the movement away from God which, in Origen's system, could bring about an ontological change (from rational beings [*logikoi*] to souls [ψυχαί]), movement is a positive force within created nature, essentially synonymous with ascetic ascent. This paradoxical combination of movement and rest removes the danger of another yet fall at the end of time.

Here we see a difficulty with this scheme. Is the fate of the blissful, eternal, and irreversible ascent towards God, common to all beings? Are all fallen beings, corporeal and incorporeal, proceeding towards their salvation, their reconciliation with God, (p. 329) and their eventual inclusion in the rest of God? If we read the great triad of creation–movement–rest as a description of the way created nature behaves (in other words, if the ascent towards God is a mechanical characteristic of created nature), then salvation is automatic, and all fallen beings, including fallen angels, will be saved simply by following their nature. Yet, for Maximus neither salvation nor sin is determined by nature. Instead, he offers a much more sophisticated view, by connecting salvation and sin with the concept that cost him his freedom and eventually his life: the will.

Maximus argued that the Fall brought about a change in the way human nature existed, which used to be simple and then became composite, in disunity with itself. Therefore, while some parts of the human being retained the memory of God and the orientation towards God (the *logos* of existence), human will was turned to an inclination away from God. The natural will with which humans were initially endowed, which guided them towards what their nature really wished, in accordance with the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, was now broken. Instead, human beings had to proceed using their subjective opinions, and with continuous deliberation, known as gnomic will.

In much of the modern literature (a good collection of which can be found in Vasiljević 2013) one can discern a negative attitude towards gnomic will, as if it is not merely one of the consequences of the Fall, but as if it is almost identified with sin itself. The implication is, presumably, that the exercise of human free will led to the Fall, and certainly that will was not natural. Nevertheless, if by gnomic will we mean the will that was transformed as a result of the Fall, at the same time as other ontological changes, such as death, also became part of the human condition, we have to acknowledge that it is a result rather than a cause of the Fall. This negative outlook, however, is not the attitude we find in Maximus, or in the ascetic literature before him. The gnomic condition of human will is a reflection

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of the ontological change of the Fall, and yet also of the ascetic struggle towards God. For Maximus the existence of evil is defined by the distance between gnomic and divine will, but it is precisely at the level of (gnomic) will that the spiritual struggle is fought, since this is where will is exercised.

The movement between creation and rest, therefore, corresponds to the ascetic ascent of the soul towards God. Despite the connection between nature and will (Maximus' main argument against the monothelites), this ascent is not determined by nature, but by the orientation of the will towards God, and by free choice. It is up to the individual, in the end, to follow 'the way of death' or 'the way of life', to use the expressions of the *Didache*. The deliberation that is inherent in gnomic will makes struggle and asceticism, and ultimately the way towards salvation, possible.

In *Questions and Doubts* 19, commenting on the concept of apokatastasis in Gregory of Nyssa,[4] Maximus writes that the church knows or recognizes three kinds of restoration: the first kind has to do with the restoration of a person through the *logos* of virtue. Although Maximus does not explain this further here, this restoration sounds more ontological than moral in nature, because the operative agent of change is the *logos*, (p. 330) which can restore the mode (τρόπος) of being. In other words, this restoration is the beginning of the change of the mode of nature. Also, since Maximus connects it with the *logos* of virtue, this restoration is not automatic for all but is only a result of the exercise of virtue, of ascetic ascent. It is not clear, however, whether this restoration is an eschatological one; there is nothing in the text to suggest that it is reserved for the end of time and could not happen during this lifetime. The ascetic character of this change, however, makes it seem important, perhaps with a role to play in the eschaton.

The second kind of restoration has to do with the restoration of the whole nature of the human being, which we usually refer to as the resurrection of the dead, at the end of time. The human being will be restored in its fullness, no more in the state of separated soul and body. By preferring the expression 'restoration of the whole nature' in the aforementioned passage, Maximus shows how strong is his belief in the view of the participation of the human being in the last things, both in body and in soul. This restoration applies to all people, but somewhat passively since it is associated with nature, and is, of course, part and parcel of the last things.

The third kind of restoration, which Maximus takes from Gregory of Nyssa (*Life of Moses* 2, Musurillo 1991: 110–20) has to do with the restoration of the powers of the soul to the state they had when they were created, before they were altered by sin. Although Maximus does not follow this up in this particular passage, it is clear that for him this restoration is the healing of the fragmentation of the human being, the fall of the will, and its distortion from natural to gnomic. Therefore, he interprets the concept of restoration as he finds it in Gregory of Nyssa, as the restoration of human natural will. Maximus says this more clearly in his commentary on Psalm 59 (Van Deun 1991: 3. 7–17).

In addition to this passage, which refers directly to the apokatastasis, there are three passages from the *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* which reflect the views of Maximus on the final restoration of the world and the forgiveness of all (*Q.Thal.* prol., Laga–Steel 1980: 39–40; *Q.Thal.* 21, Laga–Steel 1980: 131, 133; *Q.Thal.* 43, Laga–Steel 1980: 293–7). Two of those comments touch on the issue of the two trees in the Garden of Eden, a theme that had been connected to the concept of the apokatastasis since Origen. The third passage refers to the victory of Christ over evil through his crucifixion. In these passages Maximus states that there is a 'better and more secret explanation, which is kept in the minds of the mystics, but we, as well, will honour by silence'.

Several modern commentators see this honourable silence as an implicit support of the idea of apokatastasis, which remained secret, mostly for pastoral reasons. Nevertheless, Maximus never gives his clear support to the idea, and, with the exception of the writings cited above, he never engages with it at length. Writers such as Sherwood (Sherwood 1955a: 9) have noted that although Maximus criticized in detail many other of the ideas of Origen, in this way, by trying to correct and absorb several of them, he developed his own system. On the other hand, there are several passages in his work that discuss the situation after the final judgement and speak of eternal punishment for the ones who freely used the *logos* of their being contrary to nature (*Amb.Io.* 42, PG 91. 1329A1–B7; *Amb.Io.* 65, PG 91. 1392C9–D13; *Q.Thal.* 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 55, 57). What is this eternal punishment? At a first level we can discern a certain ambivalence here. (p. 331) Although it is clear that Maximus believes that there cannot be an automatic, universal salvation for everyone, we can suspect that he finds something interesting in the idea of the restoration of the world. Because of this ambivalence, modern scholarship (cf. Vasiljević 2013) has mined the thought of Maximus in pursuit of direct or implied support of the concept of

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apokatastasis, but most of the thought on this subject has to do with whether he supports or denies the idea of the restoration of all in the way we find it in Origen. While this is clearly not the case, there is obviously more than meets the eye here. Perhaps the area of our inquiry is the distance between the certainty of a universal restoration and the hope and possibility for all souls to be saved.

As we saw above, when Maximus discussed the three kinds of restoration known by the church, he examined more closely the restoration of the powers of the soul to the state they had before the Fall. It is interesting that he sees this restoration as something that will happen to all people at the end of time, just like the resurrection of the body. Maximus sees the resurrection of the dead as a restoration of the entire human being to its state before the Fall: not only the body, but the soul and its relationship with the body will be restored. This can be understood through the prism of his anthropology, which is not comfortable with the separation between the two. Nevertheless, the point here is that the restoration of will from its gnomic to its natural state (as we can also see in the aforementioned passage from his commentary on Psalm 59) will be common to all people, just like the resurrection of the body. However, this topic demonstrates the difference between Origen and Maximus at a different level: the two restorations that are granted to everyone at the end of time return the human being to its state before the Fall (although this time the human being consists of a soul and a body), but this is not enough to guarantee salvation. An additional step needs to be taken. Maximus does not presume that the next step will be automatic, or likewise common to all. On the contrary, he makes a sharp differentiation between a lesser knowledge of God (ἐπίγνωσις), which implies an intellectual understanding of the causality of evil, and full participation in God, which is a condition to which one proceeds by exercising one's natural (restored) yet always free will (*QD* 19, in *Philokalia* 14A, Meretakis 1992: 38).

Nevertheless, this may be the boldest statement in support of the apokatastasis of all beings that we can find in the writings of Maximus, although he certainly keeps a safe distance from any bold and sweeping arguments about it. Yet, since we often think of sin as a result of the distance between us and God, and of the war inside us between what we want and what we do (what St. Paul describes in Rom. 7: 23 as 'another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members'), it is hard for us to think that even when these two obstacles are removed, we may still choose to be apart from God and under sin. What makes this difficult to visualize is that elsewhere we find images of hell and damnation, along the lines of the penance that corresponds to a certain transgression, and of God as the ultimate judge. Although such images may be found in the Gospels and in some Fathers, it is generally not the approach we find in the Greek Fathers—certainly not in the writings of Maximus, who writes much about sin, yet virtually nothing about hell. However, even the modern mind cannot fathom what kind of sin could deserve an eternity of (p. 332) torment, if the measure of the justice of God is suffering for like sin, if not more. To return to the image of the restoration, there is a similar paradox. How could it be possible not to repent and not to beg for the forgiveness of God, once our will has been restored to its natural state? One might be tempted to read the restoration of the powers of the soul as a return to the fresh state of creation, with the added benefit of the experience of sin and its effects, which makes it very difficult for us to see how anyone would then consciously choose to be away from God. And yet Maximus does not follow this argument.

The Confessor distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge, only one of which implies participation, whereas the other is a disembodied, distant knowledge, which is not relevant in the context of salvation. Effectively, the difference between these two states reflects the two possible meanings of *gnosis*, the first according to the biblical-apostolic tradition, and the second according to philosophy—we could also say knowledge by participation vs. the possession of information. This distinction is helpful in our comprehension of the riddle of the last things. What this distinction means in the context of the restoration, as considered by Maximus, is that the argumentative, calculating part of the restoration (the one that will show that God is not responsible for sin) may bring about a cognitive acceptance of the word of God, and may also demonstrate to everyone what sin is, what grace is, what forgiveness is—but this is not enough. It is not enough to have the tools: it is necessary to use them. To use the patristic expression, a movement of the soul is also necessary, in a way that allows one to use one's *logos* according to one's (restored) nature. Keeping in mind the Christocentric and cosmic significance Maximus attaches to the *logos*/*logoi*, this harmonization between *logos* and nature is worth exploring further. The *logoi* that exist in every being are a reflection of the touch of the original Logos of creation. This suggests that, although we cannot find a systematic exposition of the eschatological expectation in Maximus, Christ has a central place in it.

At any rate, it is difficult to understand the extent of the restoration of natural will in the human being, with everything this entails about the passions and the soul. First, is it restricted to humans only? And is it possible for

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this movement of the soul to take place then? Does this restoration allow for the possibility for human, angelic, and even demonic souls to repent (if they choose so), to be forgiven, and to be subsequently accepted in the kingdom of God, after their deliberative, gnomic will is restored to natural will, and after they are able to see the difference between good and evil? Is it possible to repent after death, or is forgiveness restricted to the ones who repented during their life on earth? Following the distinction between disembodied knowledge and knowledge by participation, Maximus describes the restoration which is common to all as a disembodied, objective event, which is not necessarily accompanied by a 'movement of the soul'. Although the way Maximus approaches the question of the final restoration allows us to hope and pray for the repentance, forgiveness, and salvation of all, a salvation that is automatically and mechanically common for all would deny the freedom of the soul and would transform the kingdom of God into a cruel menagerie.

(p. 333) There are additional problems with this interpretation of apokatastasis. An argument from the point of view of ethics is that, if the ontological restoration of the body and the soul were to lead everyone into the kingdom, there is no point in trying to follow the path of God. There can be no judgement, nor real forgiveness, if the compassion of God is forced on everyone as an automatic, mechanical forgiveness.

Second, if free will, gnomic or natural, is preserved after the second judgement, is there a danger of a second Fall, starting a new cycle of events? We can see something like that in the unstable rest of Origen. Maximus modified Origenist cosmology emphatically, changing the Origenist triad of becoming–rest–movement, into becoming–movement– rest, indicating precisely that the final situation has to be a cosmic balance, a stable conclusion. In *Amb.Io.* 65 (PG 91. 1392) he writes about the ὀγδοάς, the eighth day or the age to come, the 'better and endless day', which comes after 'things in motion have come to rest', and he makes a clear distinction between the fate of the righteous and the fate of the wicked. It is possible, then, that the restoration of the natural will is not sufficient to guarantee that there will be no second fall. It is no surprise that the discourse on the apokatastasis is traditionally connected to the original fall in the Garden of Eden, and the Greek Fathers saw original sin not so much as an ontological fall but as an illness that will nevertheless be concluded in a condition better, and therefore more stable, than the beginning.

How can this be accommodated with the restoration of all? On the one hand, Maximus foresees the restoration of the natural will and speaks of the purifying fire of the Second Coming, something that implies an end to the purification process, but, on the other hand, he emphasizes the final rest. Perhaps the answer can be found in a comment from the *Q.Thal.* 22 (Laga–Steel 1980: 139. 66–141. 80) where Maximus draws a distinction between the present age, the 'age of the flesh', which is characterized by doing, and the age of the Spirit that will be characterized by 'undergoing'. This suggests that the final rest will not be a static rest, but that some kind of activity is conceivable. In addition, it is not specified if the activity of that age is limited to the righteous only: the analogy to the age of doing suggests the opposite. Is it possible, then, that with the mysterious phrase 'ever-moving rest' (ἀεικίνητος στάσις), the Confessor envisioned a rest similar to the unification of the soul with God, as described by Gregory of Nyssa, where the soul moves infinitely towards God without ever being able to reach the end of infinity, but experiencing and participating increasingly in the divine energies? The 'undergoing' of the sinful souls might then be translated into the contrition and repentance they never had in life, which could perhaps even then bring them closer to God, while the righteous advance in their blissful participation of the divine. Something like that would be consistent with the possibility of a final restoration of all and with Maximus' views on the rest. This active rest would have to be understood as an unchangeable condition, in spite of the movement or undergoing of the souls, something that would satisfy its position at the end of the Maximian cosmological triad as the conclusion. It would also mean that it is not necessary to envision an ontological difference between the righteous and the wicked, as there is not one now.

(p. 334) *Mystagogy*—the Lord's Prayer

Beyond the passages where Maximus directly discusses restoration and apokatastasis, he expresses his views on eschatology in different ways as well. One of the most interesting passages is his commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and, specifically, his analysis of the reference to the bread (ἐπιούσιος).

There is a difficulty in the way the word ἐπιούσιος may be interpreted. Grammatically, it may be understood as consisting of ἐπί and οὐσία, in which case it can refer to what is substantial for our life; or it may be understood as

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consisting of ἐπί and ἰέναι, which suggests what is coming, a combination that gives us the word ἐπιοῦσα as the day of tomorrow. Latin translations are confusing at this point because, while the earlier version of the Vulgate translated ἐπιούσιος as 'quotidian' (from which the English version has kept the reference to the 'daily' bread), Jerome tried to go a little deeper. For some reason he was not familiar with the word ἐπιοῦσα, although it was not uncommon at the time, and therefore he missed the reference to the day of tomorrow. Strangely, although Jerome saved an Aramaic version of the Lord's Prayer that included the word *mahar* (*Comm. in Matt.* 6.11, Scheck 2008: 88), which means the day of tomorrow, he never considered the Greek text in this context. Instead, he translated ἐπιούσιος as 'supersubstantial' in the Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer (in the sense that it is above substance), while he maintained the earlier word 'quotidian' in the Lukan version.

Nevertheless, most of the patristic tradition accepted as normative the interpretation of John Chrysostom who read ἐπιούσιος as the bread that is necessary for life (*Matt., hom. 19*, PG 57. 280), thus discounting the eschatological reading of the Lord's Prayer. Maximus, on the other hand, interprets the reference to the bread as a symbol of Christ, who offers himself to everyone who asks him, although he is received according to each person's spiritual capacity. It is interesting that he sees this bread coming to us from beyond history, a phenomenon which he sees symbolized by the contrast with the word 'today'.

In his discussion of the Lord's Prayer, Maximus offers a layered exegetical analysis, touching upon the transcendence of history through sharing in the eucharistic bread of life. He then explains how the bread of life is Christ, who was prepared before time (connecting, as he also does in the passages where he discusses the restoration of all, the origins and the plan of God for the union of humanity with him, with the last things), and who can become present in the historical time that is denoted by 'today' ('I think in fact, that "this day" means in present history'). Finally, he repeats the imagery of John Chrysostom ('we are also charged in the prayer to ask for this day's bread, which sustains the present life'), although he gives it a slightly different meaning. Rather than simply a plea for only what is necessary, he reads it as a defiance of necessity for material things (Zizioulas 2006).

However, it is not fair to say that Maximus gives a straightforward eschatological interpretation of the Lord's Prayer, at least not in the sense we find this eschatological message in Origen's influential commentary on the Lord's Prayer, for instance. In fact, (p. 335) what makes the analysis of Maximus particularly interesting is that he treats history and the time beyond history (the time of God) in such a way that they do not seem to be in opposition. Instead they seem to flow into each other. Nevertheless, although in these passages Maximus does not make an explicit mention of the end of time and eschatology, it is clear that when he speaks about the time of God (in contrast to the time of history), this is precisely what he has in mind.

Maximus offers a mature and original interpretation of the Lord's Prayer, in contrast to the very literal meaning given in Tertullian's *On Prayer*, or to the highly symbolic readings of Origen (Nodes 2010: 82–3). Instead, we could speak of a *realized eschatology*,[5] a way in which the boundlessness of God interjects itself in human history and is shared by many people in the church (Blowers 1997). Maximus finds the eucharistic act a good way to demonstrate the two different directions combined into one.

In the thought of the Confessor, we see that the limits between an eschatological expectation of the end of linear history and a realized liturgical eschatology are not always very clear. We can see this in the *Mystagogy*, which places the eucharistic act in the centre of a cosmic network of connections (Louth 2004). The whole *Mystagogy* is written as a series of concentric circles, each of which says something about God, the cosmos, the human being, the church building, and finally the divine liturgy (although the centre of these concentric circles, the anaphora, is passed over in silence). The central part of the *Mystagogy* is dedicated to the analysis of the divine liturgy, and here we have a very clear view of the realized eschatology of Maximus: whereas the first part of the liturgy, up to and including the reading of the Gospel, corresponds with human history (including Christology), the second part has no historical counterpart. Rather it is a foretaste of the kingdom of God, as it is coming to us through the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit, from the end of time. In a very real, not simply symbolic way, the end of time is made present within historical time. This is as strongly formative on the thought of Maximus as anything else.

The way the *Mystagogy* is written draws attention not only to the views of its author, but also to its structure. This suggests that the Confessor attempts an inversion of the Dionysian hierarchy, another work whose significance lay largely in its structure. Whereas the hierarchies of Ps-Dionysius were developed along a vertical axis, at least in terms of their imagery, and ultimately had the Godhead in their centre and at their top, the *Mystagogy* places the

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eucharistic chalice in the centre. Yet by the time he gets to the discussion of the divine liturgy, he has made very clear that he sees it as a reflection and fulfilment of the cosmic, the anthropological, and the ecclesiological strands. It is in this context that we can speak about his realized liturgical eschatology.

(p. 336) Transfiguration

Many of the teachings and views of Maximus are strongly informed by his views on eschatology, although it sometimes seems that he is not particularly eager to talk directly about the last things. An examination of his mystagogical texts, as well as an examination of his theology of the *logoi*, tell us much about his eschatological views. In the case of the *logoi*, we see something very similar to what we see in the *Or.dom.*: the language that implies the end of time often gives place to the beginning of time (protology instead of eschatology), and yet the contrast between the present, historical time, and the time when the *logoi* will reveal the face of Jesus Christ is unmistakeably connected with what we usually associate with a deeper study and understanding of eschatology (cf. Louth 1996: 70–2).

Similarly, the foretaste of the kingdom of God, as it was given to Peter, John, and James during the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ, or the significance of the eighth day, also touch on eschatological themes, in the way Maximus discussed this unique biblical event. Maximus discussed the Transfiguration in detail in *QD* 191–2 (in *Philokalia* 14A, Meretakis 1992: 255–72) and *Amb.Io.* 10 (PG 91. 1125D–1128D). He followed earlier Fathers such as Irenaeus and John Chrysostom, who read the Transfiguration as a partial revelation of the kingdom of God to the three disciples, but he also considered the very event of the Transfiguration as a sign that needs to be opened, as an entry into the mystery of the kingdom. Therefore, his analysis of the Transfiguration of Christ includes elements that we do not find in other Fathers, which reveal something about the way towards Christ. The Gospel book is identified with the body of Jesus Christ (Louth 1996: 70) and its meaning becomes clear through the divine light of the Transfiguration or of the kingdom. The Gospel is put forth as a door or path that leads to the kingdom.

Maximus interprets the white garments of Christ in two ways: building on an idea initially put forth by Origen (Louth 1996: 70), he writes that they symbolize the words of scripture, and at the same time they symbolize the entire creation. Both scripture and creation consist of *logoi*, a word which means both ‘words’ (the words of scripture) and the meaning of the created order, the principles in accordance with which everything in the cosmos was created through the Word of God, the Logos. The *logoi* are fundamental to the cosmic theology of Maximus, and are discussed in many of his works. Simply put, every part of creation bears the *logos* on it, as a seal of the original Logos, Christ. This *logos* is something like the memory of the original creation (or perhaps the anticipation of the restored creation) and the harmony of everything inside it, when everything will exist according to its natural order.

Continuing with *Amb.Io.* 10, Maximus writes that the splendour of the garments of Christ shows that the words of the Gospel and the *logoi* of the universe became clear to the apostles. It is a model of eschatological revelation (the literal meaning of ἀποκάλυψις), when the words of God and the meaning of the universe will become clear, when we will be able to see God ‘face-to-face’. For Maximus, this is a foretaste of (p. 337) what will happen on a cosmic scale, a revelation of how the entire universe will become clear at the end of time.

The eschatological dimension of the Transfiguration for the Confessor is completed by the way he considers Moses and Elijah as representing different conditions of the human being that nevertheless converge around Christ. Moses and Elijah symbolize the legal and the prophetic word, wisdom and kindness, knowledge and education, activity and contemplation, marriage and celibacy, life and death, life in God and death of the passions, the fulfilment in the Logos and the illumination of the prophetic and the legal word, time and nature, the *logos* of the world perceived through the senses and the intelligible *logos*. This unlikely list of oppositions shows that Christ draws into himself all possibilities of the human condition, all the accidentals of human nature.

This image combines eschatological, cosmic, christological, and eucharistic elements. The way all of these themes are used and combined by Maximus shows us something else: that he is not interested in demonstrating a static universe, nor is he interested in a triumphalism that is completely removed from pastoral concerns. Instead, he tries to connect the vision with the practice, the descriptive doctrine with the ascetic ascent. Although he often uses the format of exegetical hermeneutics (on scripture, on Gregory the Theologian, or on Ps-Dionysius) in order to articulate his thought, his hermeneutics is the hermeneutics of dynamic salvation. It is not enough to connect the vision of the fallen apostles on Tabor with the light of the kingdom of God: he feels it is necessary to connect the

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vision of the eschaton with the present, and to study what can lead us to it.

Pentecost

Maximus sometimes displays an unusual interest on the symbolism of numbers (cf. *Q.Thal*. 40, Laga–Steel 1980: 267–75; *Q.Thal.* 55, Laga–Steel 1980: 481–513, as examples), an interest that can be traced all the way back to Origen. And yet, he does not waste any time and energy trying to uncover the secret and hidden meanings that would be revealed only to initiates. Instead, he often used numbers in order to elaborate a theological view, assuming that the meaning would be evident.

Maximus approaches the symbolism of Pentecost in an interesting way, which is based on the sermon of Gregory the Theologian on the feast of Pentecost (*QD* 5, in *Philokalia* 14A, Meretakis 1992: 14). When he discusses Gregory's sermon, he starts by pointing to the eschatological character of the eighth day of the week, which is given to us 'from the future age'. The number seven symbolizes everything that is appropriate to the limited created nature ('time, age, ages, movement, area, measure, terms, providence, and many others'), and the eighth day is a symbol of the transcendence of creation. It is on the eighth day that he sees the rest of the souls, the ever-moving rest.

But then, elsewhere, in his fifth *Century on Theology* (*Th.oec.* 5. 46, PG 90. 1365; and *Th.oec.* 5. 49, PG 90. 1369), he discusses the day of Sabbath, Easter, and Pentecost in an ascending order of importance: Sabbath (which combines features of Saturday and of (p. 338) Sunday) is a symbol of the end of the difficulties and the injustices of this life (in other words, this is the rest that death brings). Easter is the liberator of those who had been captive by sin. Pentecost is the beginning and the end, and the reason or *logos* for all creation.

When he talks about Pentecost, Maximus thinks at a different level, beyond the ritual renewal of the eighth day. What Pentecost represents is at a level above history, or rather one of the events that allow Maximus to say that the human limitations have been lifted by this act of God, the transformation of human existence through the visitation of the Holy Spirit.

In his explanation of Pentecost to Thalassius, Maximus develops further the relationship between the days of the week and Pentecost (*Q.Thal.* 65, in *Philokalia* 14C, Meretakis 1992: 394–432). If the monad multiplies itself by seven in order to form the week, then the week multiplies itself by seven, and adds to itself the original monad once again, giving us the fifty days of Pentecost. In addition, the number five represents the five senses and also all sorts of human knowledge and science, but when it is multiplied by the number of commandments God chose to give us the first time, the result is also the fifty days of Pentecost. Maximus reads this also as the relationship of the created nature (which is defined by the number five) with the deification through the grace of God (which was the reason God gave the Ten Commandments). All this strengthens further the image of the realized liturgical eschatology, since Pentecost is not only regarded as a historical event in the life of the church, but in many respects as the way to enter the community of grace. With this in mind, we can understand more clearly how, for Maximus, the divine liturgy after the reading of the Gospel does not correspond to human history, but only to the kingdom of God: Pentecost doubles here as the second coming of Christ, which is remembered in the anaphora, as if it has taken place.

In the end, the sense we get from the writings of Maximus on eschatology, including several passages where eschatology and the presence of the kingdom of God in the here-and-now is alluded to but not fully articulated, is that this state is fully expressed in the liturgical dimension, and that, even in its fullness, it does not annihilate the human condition, but includes it fully and dynamically within the presence of God.

Suggested Reading

A very useful discussion of the *logoi* and their use by Maximus may be found in Tollefsen 2008: 64–138. For an extensive analysis of will in Maximus, see Bathrellos 2004: 117–47. Louth 1996: 70–2 includes a discussion of the Transfiguration, and a more visual development of the theme of the Transfiguration in Maximus may be found in Andreopoulos 2005: 153–4. A discussion of the theme of apokatastasis in Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus can be found in Andreopoulos 2004.

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Notes:

([1]) Gregory of Nyssa, *De perfectione*, Jaeger–Cavarnos–Callahan 1986: 214; *In Cant.* 6, Langerbeck 1960: 174–5; *In Cant.* 8, Langerbeck 1960: 245–6; *Vita Moysis* 2, Musurillo 1991: 110–20. See Begzos 1992; Blowers 1992.

([2]) There is a wealth of literature on this. For a recent view of the more securely Christian aspect of Origen, see Edwards 2002.

([3]) ἀεικίνητος στάσις is used in several texts of Maximus, such as *Q.Thal.* 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 53. 131–2; *Q.Thal.* 65, Laga–Steel 1990: 285. 545–6; *Q.Thal.* 65, Laga–Steel 1990: 319. 193.

([4]) In *Philokalia* 14A, Meretakis 1992: 38; or *QD* 19 in Declerck 1982: 18.

([5]) The term *realized eschatology* is certainly problematic, if it is read as referring to a concluded and completed event. The eschaton is certainly not fully present. On the other hand, other possible terms, such as *inaugurated eschatology*, do not convey the fullness of the sacramental and liturgical weight of this idea. As it can be argued, sacramentally, liturgically, but also in relation to the theology of the saints and the relics, in certain cases it is possible to consider eschatology as something that has taken place: The eschaton is made present in history.

Andreas Andreopoulos

Andreas Andreopoulos is a reader in Orthodox Christianity and programme leader of the Master of Theology in Orthodox Studies at the University of Winchester.

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The Mode of Deification

Jean-Claude Larchet

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Abstract and Keywords

Maximus the Confessor has been introduced by a famous connoisseur of his works as the 'Doctor of deification'. Deification, which is a central theme in the spirituality of the Christian East, has in the work of the Confessor one of its most significant and complete expressions. It contributes in large part to define the nature and relations of his theology, his cosmology, his anthropology, and his spiritual doctrine. This chapter presents, in the frame of the current debate, some precisions concerning the mode and nature of human beings' deification, especially in connexion with the notion of *tropos* and the deification of human nature in the Incarnate Word, and with respect to the hypostasis (or person) and essence (or nature) of man.

Keywords: anthropology, spirituality, deification, tropos, hypostasis, person, essence, nature, human being

FOR decades those who comment on or refer to the thought of Maximus the Confessor have debated the relationship of the deification of human beings to their person and/or nature, and therefore the mode and the very nature of deification. According to the commentators of what is commonly called the 'Le Guillou school'—M.-J. Le Guillou himself and his disciples, A. Riou, F.-M. Léthel, F. Heinzer, C. Schönborn, and mainly J.-M. Garrigues (Garrigues 1974a, 1974b: 201; 1976), as well as the latter's followers, in particular Renczes (2003, 2013) and Lévy (2006)—who are connected to Thomistic thought, deification has an intentional character and refers to person, and not to nature: it is a union of the wills of the human being and God, and of the human person's *habitus* of charity with the created *habitus* of divine grace. According to the modern existentialist-personalist Orthodox school, represented by Zizioulas (1981: 23–55; 2006: 22–32 *passim*), salvation and deification are the fulfilment of the person, which is only realized through an opposition to nature and in a union with Christ of a purely personal nature (the natures of Christ and divine energy playing no role), the person being characterized mainly by his otherness and relational character. Accused by many patrologists of having a conception of person and nature discrepant with that of the Fathers, including Maximus the Confessor (Törönen 2007; Larchet 2011: 244–75; 2014: 34–62), Zizioulas has developed an interpretation of Maximus which strongly accentuates person at the expense of nature (Zizioulas 1981: 23–55; 2013), and he has said that his thinking fundamentally coincides with that of J.-M. Garrigues and the members of the Le Guillou school (Zizioulas 2013), in whom A. de Halleux had also noticed, in addition to the Thomist influence, an influence of modern personalism and existentialism (de Halleux 1974, 1977, 1978, 1980). The agreement between the two schools, however, seems to be based on a general opposition of person to nature, according to the existentialist principle 'existence precedes essence', rather than on a common conception of the person (which the members of the Le Guillou school consider especially in terms of subjectivity, and which Zizioulas understands above all in terms of otherness and relationship). The interpretation of Garrigues, the other members of the Le Guillou school, and of P. Renczes and A. Lévy, has been the subject of various (p. 342) critiques,[1] as has the personalist-existentialist system of Zizioulas, which inspires his interpretation of Maximus' thought (see Larchet 2011: 233–394, *passim*, where the criticisms of many other patrologists are also presented). Along with this interpretation of Maximus based on apriorisms connected to Thomism and modern existentialism-

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personalism, interpretations of Maximus' thought have also been founded on a serious study of the Maximian corpus and respecting the place of person and nature, respectively, as well as the fundamental role played by divine energy (references and synthesis in Larchet 1996) in the Maximian understanding of deification.

It is not possible within the limited space given to this chapter to present, even in summary, the rich and complex Maximian reflection on the topic of deification, which, occupying a central place in all his work, has been the theme of developed monographs (Weser 1869; Preuss 1894; Gross 1938: 319–27; Garrigues 1976; Larchet 1996; Savvidis 1997). But a representative element of Maximian thought on this subject can be profitably examined on account of its centrality and typicality: the change in mode *(tropos)* which deification brings about, first in Christ's human nature, and then in human beings.

Preliminary Remarks on the Notion of *Tropos*

The dyad *logos–tropos*, which Maximus uses prolifically in all areas of his thought (cosmology, triadology, Christology, anthropology, spirituality, etc.), has already been the subject of numerous studies of greater or lesser scope.[2] In association with the word *tropos*, the meaning of *logos* is simple and not problematic, although its semantic field of application may be vast. The word *logos* generally refers to the essential definition of any being, which constitutes its own nature, with a connotation of invariance. However, the word *tropos* is able to take on a variety of meanings. In general, it refers to a way of being, a way of existing, but may have a theological connotation,[3] a logical one (as in the expression τρόπος τῆς διαφορᾶς, which refers to how two realities differ from each other), an ethical one (where it refers to the way a person acts or behaves [*Opusc*. 10, PG 91. 136D–137B]), or a physical one (e.g. the water turned to blood in Egypt, the state of the Red Sea when Moses traversed it, or the state of the earth after the Flood).[4]

(p. 343) Due to the multiple meanings of the word *tropos*, the dyad *logos–tropos* has multiple meanings in the works of Maximus. Far from referring only to hypostasis (as the Thomistic and existentialist-personalist commentators mentioned above would prefer), far also from always referring respectively to the nature and hypostasis of a person who is self-determining in one way or another, and thus far from always having a hypostatic connotation (as Skliris 2013 would show in order to support the personalistic interpretation of his master, J. Zizioulas), the dyad *logos–tropos* often has the function of accounting for the fact that the reality of any natural order can attain to a new, supernatural mode of existence, while remaining the same in its essence. The general principle is expressed in the fundamental passage of *Amb.Io.* 42:

> Every innovation, generally speaking, takes place in relation to the mode of whatever is being innovated, not in relation to its principle of nature, because when a principle is innovated it effectively results in the destruction of nature, since the nature in question no longer possesses inviolate the principle according to which it exists. When, however, the mode is innovated—so that the principle of nature is preserved inviolate—it manifests a wondrous power, for it displays nature being acted on and acting outside the limits of its own laws. Now the principle of human nature is that it consists of soul and body, and this nature consists of a rational soul and body, whereas its mode is the order whereby it naturally acts and is acted upon, frequently alternating and changing, without however in any way changing nature along with it. And this is exactly what happens in the case of every other thing, whenever God—in his providence for all that is subject to his care, and to demonstrate his power that is over all and through all things—wishes to manifest something new in his creation.
>
> (*Amb.Io*. 42, PG 91. 1341D–1344A)

Let us recall with regard to the definition of *tropos* given in this passage that for Maximus, as well as for his predecessors (in particular the Cappadocians), operation (ἐνέργεια) is relative to a power, which is itself relative to an essence (Bradshaw 2004; Larchet 2010). In the case of persons, they have by their freedom the initiative of 'how to operate', but the notions of essence, power, and operation can refer to every being capable of operating and being operated, on the understanding that any person or object may, in its nature, 'be operated' by an operation that does not belong to its own nature, but relates to a power or an essence that is separate; for example, when God accomplishes through his grace (that is to say, his energy) miracles in human beings or in beings of nature.

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In the continuation of the text quoted above, Maximus gives particularly illuminating examples concerning the fact that the change of *tropos* may be a change of the mode of existence of any being, person, or object in its very nature, by the action of divine grace:

> Indeed this is exactly what He did from the very beginning, when, in the course of bringing about the unexpected, he wrought magnificent signs and wonders, all by this principle of innovation. Thus He translated the blessed Enoch and Elijah from life in corruptible flesh to another form of life, not by altering their human nature, but by an alteration of its condition and conduct. […] He honoured his great servants, **(p. 344)** Abraham and Sarah, with a child, despite the fact that they were long past the age and ordinary limit and time of natural childbearing. […] He set alight the burning bush with an unburning fire in order to summon His servant. In Egypt, He transformed water into the quality of blood, without in any way suppressing its nature, since the water remained water by nature even after it turned red. […] He divided the sea by means of the rod and kept the water from flowing together, without it going outside its nature, creating a passage for those who for His sake were being pursued, and thwarting those who without cause persecute what is noble and free. He sweetened the water with a piece of wood […]. He showed forth the driest of rocks to be a mother of living water, without the rock being altered into another nature, on account of the water, for the strengthening of the faith of those who were abandoning their struggles. He stopped the flow of the river so that the godly people might pass dry-shod. He miraculously halted the unimpeded course of the sun and the moon, arresting the perpetually moving nature of the encircling sphere […]. And the same is true with all the rest of the things that God is said to have done in 'the land of possession', and in the other lands through which the ancient Israelites wandered after they had transgressed – that is, when God innovated the nature of the things that were innovated, He accomplished this with respect to their mode of energy, not their *logos* of existence.
>
> (*Amb.Io*. 42, PG 91. 1344A–D)

The Deification of Human Nature in the Incarnate Word

The deification of the Christian is based on the deification—and prerequisite salvation—of human nature in the hypostasis of the incarnate Word (Larchet 1996: 221–362). This is expressed notably by the famous *tantum-quantum* formula (Larchet 1996: 376–82) that Maximus uses many times in different forms: a human being becomes god by grace inasmuch as God has become human by the divine plan (Economy). This deification of the human nature in Christ is accomplished by virtue of the *perichoresis* of Christ's natures, made possible by the particular type of union, which in him is a hypostatic one.[5]

The fact that the human nature of the incarnate Word is itself actually deified by reason of its union and its *perichoresis* with his divine nature according to hypostasis, and the fact that, accordingly, the human nature of Christ, just like his divine nature, preserves its essential properties (i.e. it is profoundly changed and remains at the same time essentially the same), form a contradiction to which Maximus finds a solution in the distinction between *logos* (λόγος) and *tropos* (τρόπος).

(p. 345) In Christology, Maximus uses the dyad *logos–tropos* on various levels. In some cases, it is related to the Word's new mode of conception and begetting in the flesh, which constitutes an 'innovation' of human nature preserving its *logos*. Maximus says this, for example, in what immediately follows the passage just quoted (*Amb.Io*., 42, PG 91. 1344D–1345A), but also in many other passages (Larchet 1996: 263–73). In other cases, it is related to the fact that Christ, because he is not a 'mere human being', but rather possesses a human nature closely united to his divine one according to hypostasis, operates as a human being in a way 'exceeding human' (Larchet 1996: 275–362). Thus, in *Amb.Th.* 5, the dyad *logos–tropos* is used to explain several Ps-Dionysian expressions, and first of all this one: 'He became a human being in a manner beyond being, and in a manner beyond the human he works the things of a human being.' Maximus notes that in saying this, Ps-Dionysius 'did not abrogate the constitutive energy of the essence that [Christ] assumed, nor did he abrogate the essence itself … but in both instances showed the newness of the modes preserved in the permanence of their natural principles, without which no being remains what it is' (*Amb.Th*. 5, Janssens 2002: 24. 99–104). He notes further:

> [Christ] 'in a manner beyond a human being, does the things of a human being', according to a supreme union involving no change, showing that the human energy is conjoined with the divine power, since the

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> human nature, united without confusion to the divine nature, is completely penetrated by it, with absolutely no part of it remaining separate from the divinity to which it was united, having been assumed according to hypostasis. For 'in a manner beyond us', the 'Word beyond being truly assumed our being', and joined together the transcendent negation with the affirmation of our nature and its natural properties, and so became human, having united his transcendent mode of existence with the principle of his human nature, so that the ongoing existence of that nature might be confirmed by the newness of the mode of existence, not suffering any change at the level of its inner principle, and thereby make known his power that is beyond infinity, recognized through the generation of opposites. … For by virtue of his ineffable conception the Word beyond being clothed himself in all the elements of nature along with nature itself, and he had nothing positively human (in the principle of his human nature) that was not also divinely negated by the transcendent mode of existence.
>
> (*Amb.Th*. 5, Janssens 2002: 27)

Then, commenting on this statement of Ps-Dionysius: 'In short, he was not a human being, not because he was not a human being, but rather like one who had come forth from human beings, he was beyond human beings, and in a manner beyond a human being, he truly become a human being' (*Ep*. 4, Heil–Ritter 1991: 161. 6–9), he notes:

> 'He was not a human being', for he was free by nature from the necessity of nature, since he did not owe his existence to the law of generation that applies to us, 'not because he was not a human being' (for he was 'that which in the entirety of its essence is truly human', having assumed by nature our natural attributes), 'but rather (p. 346) like one who had come forth from human beings', since he is consubstantial with us, a human being like us according to his nature, yet he is 'beyond human beings', and encompasses nature in a newness of modes, a thing that was not within our power. 'And in a manner beyond a human being, he truly became a human being', since he maintained the modes of existence (which are above nature), along with the principles of being (which are according to nature), united and unimpaired. The conjunction of these was beyond what is possible, but he for whom nothing is impossible became their true union, and was the hypostasis in neither of them exclusively, in no way acting through one of the natures in separation from the other, but in all that he did he confirmed the presence of the one through the other, since he is truly both.
>
> (*Amb.Th*. 5, Janssens 2002: 24)

The same idea is found in the *Dispute with Pyrrhus* (*DP*, PG 91. 297D–300A).

Moreover, many of the texts concerning the deification of the Word's human nature recall the mode *(tropos)*, surpassing nature, of his powers or faculties (δυνάμεις)—including the intellect (νοῦς) and will—and his operations (ἐνέργειαι), which relate to nature. Maximus thus understands deification to concern the mode of existence (or the 'how to be') of the assumed nature, and not its essence, which remains unaffected. This understanding is confirmed by a passage of *Ambigua Addressed to John*, which speaks of human nature 'subsisting divinely' and where this divine subsistence is related to the '*logos* of "how to be"'—an expression that can be considered as an equivalent to the concept of *tropos* (*Amb.Io*. 36, PG 91. 1289CD).

Some commentators accept this interpretation. Thus Sherwood notes that in Christ, 'the [human] nature and will are wholly divinized, not as to their nature, which remain ever human, but according to the mode of their existence [which is divine]. This is the mystery of Christ' (Sherwood 1955b: 57–8).

Unlike the previous interpretation, recent interpretations of both an existentialist-personalist and Thomist bent, which understand *tropos* in a hypostatic sense only, and this in turn in an intentional way (which gives at once a modalist and Nestorian colouring to the understanding of deification), do not seem acceptable when set alongside Maximus' own texts. One is indeed struck by the large number of passages in his work that clearly express the deification of Christ's human nature in terms of nature.[6]

When Maximus, trying to resolve as much as possible the contradiction of a nature that can actually be deified without losing its essential characteristics, uses the notion of *tropos*, it does proceed from this understanding of deification that so strongly emphasizes the place of nature: for what is changed is the *tropos* of the hypostatized nature, its (p. 347) mode of being, its 'how to be' and 'how to subsist'; or, as Maximus says in another context, its

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state (ἕξις) or quality (ποιότης), the *logos* of this nature remaining all the while unchanged.

It would be absurd to consider a deification of the person of Christ, since the hypostasis of Christ, who is one, is divine and does not have to be deified. To speak of a deification of the person of Christ would express either an Arian position (denying that his person is a priori divine) or a Nestorian one (stating that there is a person who is divine and a second person, human, which needs to be deified). If deification has a meaning, it can only be with respect to his human nature and relate to a mode of that nature's existence.

It remains true that the deified human nature is indeed that of Christ, is hypostatized by the person of the divine Word, and cannot be considered apart from his person, since in the case of Christ—as in all others—there is never nature without hypostasis.

The Deification of the Human Being

When human beings are deified, the laws and the limits of nature are abolished for them. They are elevated above nature and their own nature.

According to Maximus, deified human beings are led beyond the limits of nature. This not only means that they renounce the operations of their natural faculties, desist from every activity relating to the world, abandon every relationship with created beings so as to be united to God alone, transcend (especially concerning knowledge) 'all that is after God'; it also means that, in ecstasy, they go out of themselves and are elevated beyond themselves so as to be united with God, enveloped and penetrated by him in accordance with the divine energy, which has come to them and operates in them by their free consent (Sherwood 1955b: 124–54; Larchet 1996: 527–81). Maximus considers that, in the mystical experience in which they are divinized, the believers are brought beyond their own nature and transcend its limits, which are also those of created nature in general (Larchet 1996: 582–6). In the modern personalist-existentialist perspective, which is that of Zizioulas (1981, 2006), one could understand that the human being surpasses nature as a person. In reality, the deified believers escape the laws and necessities of their nature, no longer manifesting its 'particularities', 'characteristics', or 'traits', because these have all been covered by the grace that indwells and transforms.[7]

It is clear that for Maximus, as indicated by the abovementioned texts, deified human beings transcend not only the limits of created nature in general, but also the limits of their own nature. In *Q.Thal.* 22, he states that God's grace grants the human being deification by 'illuminat[ing] human nature with supernatural light, and, by the superiority of its glory, elevates our nature above its proper limits in excess of glory' (*Q.Thal*. 22, (p. 348) Laga–Steel 1980: 141. 96–8). A scholium of the same work indicates that the intellect (νοῦς), in accordance with its union with God, 'displaces the laws of its own natures inasmuch as it is attached to God as above nature and has become god through participation' (*Q.Thal*. 33, scholium 3, Laga–Steel 1980: 233. 12–15). In *Question* 38, Maximus notes that the human nature that will later appear will not be 'governed by any of the previous laws, being henceforth deified and brought into accord with God the Word himself by the Spirit' (*Q.Thal.* 38, Laga–Steel 1980: 257. 40–4). But this is already true, as the foregoing statements have shown, for the human being deified on earth who receives the first-fruits of future deification.

This surpassing of the laws of human nature, as well as of those of the nature of all other beings, is particularly evident in the fact that the deified believer becomes in a kind of way matterless and formless (*Amb.Io*. 30, PG 91. 1273C). This does not mean, in practice, a dematerialization of the body or a loss of the organizing principle of the soul and body, but access for the body and soul—the two components of human nature—to another spiritual and supernatural state where they no longer depend on the laws and requirements relating to the matter and form to which beings in nature are subject (Larchet 1996: 626–41).

One finds repeatedly in Maximus' work the idea that the marks of human nature no longer appear, and are even eliminated, in deification, being 'defeated' by the grace or glory that penetrates and envelops the deified human being (*Th.oec*. 2. 88, PG 90. 1168A–B; *Ep*. 2, PG 90. 408B). In the last excerpt cited for reference, it appears that the divine properties, of which the human being becomes a partaker by grace, end up replacing the human traits. This idea is found again in two important passages of *Amb.Io.* 10, where Maximus writes about the saints:

> Having been wholly united with the whole Word, within the limits of what their own inherent natural potency

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> allows, as much as may be, they were imbued with his own qualities, so that, like the clearest of mirrors, they are now visible only as reflections of the undiminished form of God the Word, who gazes out from within them, for they possess the fullness of his divine characteristics, yet none of the original attributes that naturally define human beings have been lost, for all things have simply yielded to what is better, like air—which in itself is not luminous—completely mixed with light.
>
> (*Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1137B–C)

Maximus further states:

> This, I think, is what that wondrous and great man, Melchizedek … learned through experience, for he was deemed worthy to transcend time and nature and to become like the Son of God. Having acquired the divine likeness (as far as is possible), he became by grace what the Giver of grace is by nature. For it is said of him that he was 'without father or mother or genealogy', which I understand to mean the complete setting aside of natural characteristics through the highest gift of grace in accordance with virtue.
>
> (*Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1137C–D)

(p. 349) Maximus speaks of 'union with the Word' and of 'assimilation to the Son of God' because Christ is the mediator of union with God, and not because it would be a union situated on a purely hypostatic level: the grace of deification that believers receive from Christ—grace that transforms them and imprints in them divine characteristics—is the common divine grace of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the uncreated divine energy relative to the uncreated divine essence common to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, but communicated to human beings from the Father by the Son in the Spirit, or from the Father in the Son by the Holy Spirit. And the divine marks imprinted in the deified human being are not traits peculiar to the Son in his hypostatic otherness, but common to all three persons of the Trinity, otherwise belonging to their common energies that relate to their common essence.

The Transformation of Deified Human Beings

Maximus says repeatedly that human beings, by virtue of their divinization, undergo a complete transformation, and that this transformation does affect their nature (Larchet 1996: 587–9), which, in a way—in accordance with a certain *tropos*—is actually changed.[8]

Even though he experiences a real transformation in his very nature by virtue of deification, even though he effectively becomes God, deified human beings do not lose their essential properties and so remain immutably, unchangeably and fully human, not becoming God in essence; indeed, their human nature is not transformed into the divine nature and is not confused in any way with it (Larchet 1996: 589–91). For this reason, their person remains a human person, and does not become a divine person, the person thus maintaining their hypostatic identity (Larchet 1996: 614–16).

Maximus delineates, in a rather general way, the limits of identity with God that human beings can achieve. He says that human beings become 'like God', stating that they become 'similar to God and equal to him inasmuch as this is possible' (*Amb.Io*. 20, PG 91. 1241C), or that they take on the divine properties 'inasmuch as this is possible' (*Ep*. 2, PG 91. 408B). More specifically, Maximus shows in several ways that human nature remains unchanged.[9] Moreover, he states in several places that the human being does not become God by nature or essence.[10]

(p. 350) These considerations are obviously related to the many comments in the same vein that concern the human nature assumed by the incarnate Word, who by virtue of deification has not been altered, but has retained intact all its essential properties (see for example: *Amb.Io*. 31, PG 91. 1280B; *Ep*. 12, PG 91. 468C; *Opusc*. 20, PG 91. 236B).

The comparisons used by Maximus with regard to deification—air illuminated by light; iron set ablaze by fire (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1076A); a sword, plunged into the fire, the edge of which becomes red hot (see *Amb.Th*. 5, Janssens 2002: 33. 272–84; *Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 189C–192A)—evoke a union without confusion and a transformation that allows what is transformed to keep its essential identity.

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Several commentators on Maximus note that in deification there is actually a transformation of human nature, which —far from suppressing such nature as such—raises it beyond itself and perfects it (Meyendorff 1969: 116, 97, 220; 1975: 54, 288; Thunberg 1995: 425–27; Doucet 1985: 152).

The fact that human beings should be the subject of a deification that transforms them and affects their nature, without however changing their nature in essence, is an antinomy that finds its solution in a number of clarifications given by Maximus in most cases where he mentions deification.

Deification by Grace, Participation, Position, State, and Quality

1. When speaking of deification, Maximus almost always states that a human being becomes God 'by grace' or 'according to grace' (κατὰ χάριν), which in certain contexts means that human beings are deified, not by an operation coming from their own nature (which does not have the power to do this), but by a divine operation (Larchet 1996: 545–53); but in other contexts—and this is the meaning we are presently interested in—this means that human beings do not become God by nature, nor do they acquire the essence of God, but become god according to a particular modality, which is that of grace or divine energy, in accordance with which they are closely united to God, and which imprints on them its own marks.

The passages from Maximus' work emphasizing that human beings are deified 'according to grace' are numerous (references in Larchet 1996: 594–5).

The deification of human beings 'according to grace' means their participation in God according to the divine energies (Lossky 1944: 84; 1962: 109–110; Sartorius 1965: 74; Larchet 1996: 596–600). Like his predecessors, Maximus relates energy (whether divine or human) to essence or nature, and not to hypostasis (Larchet 2010). The divine energies are distinct but in no way separate from God's essence (or nature), of which they are the manifestation *ad extra* (Maximus often defines them as 'what is around God'). (p. 351) God, who in his essence is wholly imparticipable, nonetheless manifests himself fully and entirely in his energies, and through them makes himself fully and wholly participable (Larchet 2010: 331–421).

Participation in God according to the energies thus allows the human being to become truly and fully God without, however, becoming God in essence or nature. Such a conception avoids pantheism, while affirming a true union and communion with God, and even a transformation into what he is, without this transformation of the human being into god bringing about an essential identity with God, and without both parties losing their essential or natural identity.

These energies are uncreated, as indicated by several passages in Maximus' works.[11]

It should be noted that if the phrase 'according to grace' is omnipresent, other terms are often associated with it in order to indicate the particular mode of this deification as opposed to deification according to nature or essence.

2. Maximus sometimes speaks of deification by participation in various turns of phrase, and without developing in these places a specific doctrine of participation, or at least without indicating precisely how he understands this notion (he notes elsewhere that this participation is ineffable [*Q.Thal*. 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 59. 230]), but by it, he undoubtedly has in mind the distance that exists between the nature of the divinized human being and the divine nature itself, that is, opposing this divinization by participation to a divinization by nature.[12]

3. Maximus often says that the human being is deified by θέσις, that is, by position, attribution, institution, or decree, the Greek word being rather difficult to translate, but defining in this context (for this word also has other meanings in the Confessor's works) a state that is not natural and does not belong to the constitution of a thing, but has been acquired by virtue of a divine bestowal, which is a manifestation of God's grace. 'By position' is thus often opposed to 'by nature' (*Ep*. 9, PG 91. 445C; *Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 33C.). Often the concept of 'position' is combined in various ways with that of 'grace'.[13]

4. Maximus also says that the human becomes God by state (ἕξις). This term cannot be equated, without misuse, with the scholastic notion of *habitus*, the underlying understanding of this concept being anachronistic and inadequate in relation to Maximus' thought, despite the desire of some recent commentators (p. 352) (Garrigues 1974a; Renczes 2003; Lévy 2006). The word ἕξις (which has a variety of

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meanings [Lampe 1961: 497] that these commentators seem not to have perceived) loses here the connotation of personal disposition (which it sometimes takes on elsewhere). It retains the meaning of a stable acquired state, and it remains true that it does not proceed from the essence and does not affect the essential characteristics of the nature or its *logos*, but concerns its *tropos* or mode of existence. Yet at the higher level of deification, which human beings are unable to accomplish by themselves, the state or way of being or mode of existence—which is then a divine state (ἕξις) or mode of existence—cannot be defined by the persons themselves, but is determined by the divine operation alone. Nonetheless, the persons freely will and accept that God thus qualifies their nature and grants them such a state, having previously made themselves disposed to receiving it (here we find the first meaning of ἕξις, the concept of 'state'). It is a supernatural state produced or established by God, and thus acquired by human beings as a free gift. It is at this level that we must understand this assertion of Maximus: 'The aim of theological mystagogy is to establish one by grace in a state of being like God and equal to God, as much as this is possible' (*Amb.Io*. 20, PG 91. 1241C), or again this statement: the Holy Spirit, 'through the true knowledge acquired by exertion, transfigures the mind with the blessed light-rays of our God and Father, such as the mind is deemed another god insofar as in its state it experiences by grace, that which God does not experience but is in his very essence' (*Q.Thal*. 6, Laga–Steel 1980: 69–71. 28–35). It is noteworthy that, in the same context and in relation to the ultimate 'perfection', Maximus speaks of the 'divine state' (θεία ἕξις), which is deification (*Ep*. 1, PG 91. 376B).
5. We can also consider that human beings, according to Maximus, are divinized according to quality (ποιότητι), indicating that they acquire a divine quality without acquiring the divine essence, that is, the qualities of human beings' nature are affected without becoming divine in essence.[14]

This idea obviously accords with the one encountered above, namely that the divine 'marks' are imprinted in the human being by grace and replace the human ones, the human being remaining, however, essentially human. It can also be linked to the comparisons used by Maximus of air that becomes luminous, acquiring a luminous quality without becoming light and ceasing to be air, or of iron, which, plunged into the fire, 'is subject to the qualities of fire' (*Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 189CD), becoming red hot and luminous, yet without becoming fire or ceasing to be iron.

(p. 353) **How Human Beings Become God**

The above considerations, concerning deification according to state or quality, have nearly led us to finding the meaning of the distinction, dear to Maximus, between *logos* and *tropos*, with the Greek word τρόπος able to be translated fittingly as 'way of being', and a change in quality not implying a change in the essential properties of nature.

We have seen that in Christology the Maximian distinction of *logos* and *tropos* lends itself to resolving the antinomy constituted by the fact that Christ's human nature is deified, yet retains unchanged all its essential properties. This same distinction is used to account for the fact that human beings are at once transformed in their nature by deification, but nevertheless retain their essential properties: human beings are deified not according to the *logos* of their nature, but according to the *tropos* or mode of their nature's existence. We can apply this distinction to the deified human being by grounding ourselves in how Maximus uses it in Christology, and more broadly, in what he says in the passage from *Amb.Io*. 42 (PG 91. 1341D–44A), quoted above, to explain in general all God's miraculous interventions, where, according to the grace, some natural realities were supernaturally made new while preserving their essential properties.

Used in relation to the deified human being, the notion of *tropos* cannot be understood in a purely personal sense (as the previously mentioned commentators of Thomistic and existentialist-personalist bent do), but refers to a certain mode of existence of nature (distinguished from its essential *logos*): if this mode of existence is in some cases defined by the person who hypostatizes human nature (insofar as they are responsible for choosing how the powers or faculties of their nature operate, that is, act or behave), in other cases—such as that of the deification of the human being—it is defined by God. The concept of the mode of existence (just like the concept of 'state' [ἕξις]) is understood by Maximus to have different meanings in different contexts and at different levels as has been demonstrated elsewhere (Larchet 1996).

In the Maximian understanding, one cannot a fortiori reduce *tropos*—as the aforementioned commentators would like—to the filial mode of existence which is that of the Son of God in his relation to the Father, and after which the

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human beings should model themselves so as to be deified,[15] an idea echoed by Zizioulas (2006) which has been the subject of a detailed critique (Larchet 1996, 2011: 330–1, 344–5).

(p. 354) Entitative Character of the Deification of the Human Being

It is clear that for Maximus (as well as for the Greek Fathers in general (Congar 1935: 101), the deification of the human being possesses an 'entitative' character that involves nature, and not a purely moral or 'intentional' character linked to a single person, as some recent commentators would have it,[16] who have been accused of slipping 'towards some kind of modalism' (de Halleux 1974; 1975: 491) and of 'replacing what is entitative with what is intentional' (de Halleux 1977: 233). Also irrelevant is any understanding of deification in existentialist-personalist terms, inspired by modern philosophy, which excludes nature or minimizes its place (Zizioulas 2006, 2013).

An examination of Maximian positions indeed shows that for him the deification of the saints undoubtedly affects their nature in a certain way (Doucet 1985: 152; Brune 1978: 154; Larchet 1996). If it is true that in many expressions Maximus indicates that it is always persons who are deified, he nonetheless presents deification in these same expressions, or in others, as relating to the nature of these persons. In his *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* he states that 'the purpose of the divine Counsel is the deification of our nature' (*Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 29. 50–1). In *Questions Addressed to Thalassius*, he says that 'intrinsically it is only by the grace of God that deification is bestowed proportionately on created beings. Grace alone illuminates human nature with supernatural light, and, by the superiority of its glory, elevates our nature above its proper limits in excess of glory' (*Q.Thal*. 22, Laga–Steel 1980: 141. 94–8). Referring to communion with Christ, he writes that 'the flesh of the Word is the perfect ascent and return of nature to itself through virtue and knowledge' (*Q.Thal*. 35, Laga–Steel 1980: 161. 39–44). He notes that the Lord 'suggests through the Gospel the incorruptibility of nature that will be manifest later, showing human nature not to be governed by any of the previous laws, being henceforth deified and brought into accord with God the Word himself by the Spirit' (*Q.Thal*. 38, Laga–Steel 1980: 205. 40–4). He refers to 'the knowledge once again given back to nature, which has been transformed in the grace of deification by the Word, who, inasmuch as he is good, has created and deified nature by grace in his love for the human being' (*Q.Thal*. 40, Laga–Steel 1980: 273. 107–110). He notes that the saints 'sought out and examined […] the incorruptibility of nature and the *logoi* of its deification' (*Q.Thal*. 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 61. 240–2), stating that 'the law of grace was established as a supernatural *logos* fashioning nature in an immutable way for its deification' (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 237. 800–1). Maximus' works abound with many other similar statements.

(p. 355) Other considerations could be added to those above, which we do not have the space to develop here, to show the fundamental place of nature in the Maximian understanding of deification: in particular: (1) the strong link Maximus establishes between the divine plan of deification and the *logos* of human nature where it is inscribed (Larchet 1996: 105–23); (2) the fact that, according to Maximus, the divine plan of deification concerns not only the human being, but all creatures, thus including those which are not persons;[17] (3) the broad sense in which Maximus understands the notion of filial adoption (where the deified human being receives the full dignity of a child of God rather than as son of the Father in the strict sense of the word), and the fact that Maximus does not identify deification with sonship, but sees in the latter a correlative and complementary process (Larchet 1996: 616–26); 4) the fact that deification is operated by divine power, and that there is thus 'only one single energy, that of God and of those worthy of God, or rather of God alone, who in a manner befitting his goodness wholly interpenetrates all who are worthy' (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1076C), namely, an energy of God, active in the deified human being who has freely deactivated their own natural energy (Larchet 1996: 227–81), which is related to the essence or common nature of the three divine Persons (Larchet 2010).

Conclusion to The Mode of Deification

It is important to remember that Maximus—who considers as synonyms essence and nature on the one hand, and hypostasis and person on the other (*Opusc*. 14, PG 91. 149B, 152A; Larchet 2014: 35–48)—does not intend to oppose person to nature or nature to person. He considers both as inseparable: it is a well-established principle for him that on the one hand, one 'cannot conceive a hypostasis without nature' (*Opusc*. 23, PG 91. 264A)—according to Maximus, the link of hypostasis to nature is so strong that he does not hesitate to say in general that 'hypostasis is in any case a nature' (*Opusc*. 23, PG 91. 264A), and to speak on several occasions, with regard to Christ, of his

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'natures from which, in which and which he is' (Piret 1982: 203–21; 1983)—and on the other hand, to say, 'there is no nature without hypostasis' (*Opusc*. 23, PG 91. 261C).

While nature is indissociable from hypostasis, as is hypostasis from nature, it is nevertheless clear from the texts we have quoted and from a fuller demonstration we have provided elsewhere (Larchet 1996) that Maximus, in his understanding of the process of deification—firstly in its christological presuppositions (the deification of Christ's human nature in his hypostasis) and secondly in its fulfilment (the actual deification of the believers by the divine operation/energy that transforms them)—gives priority to the natural dimension of human beings (the mode of existence of which is changed (p. 356) by deification) rather than to their strictly personal dimension, considered either in its subjectivity and individual moral dispositions (the Le Guillou school) or in its otherness and relationality (Zizioulas).

This does not prevent Maximus from assigning an important role in the preparatory stages of deification to the initiative and free ascetic effort of the person, in relation to what belongs to their nature and in synergy with God's grace, so as to establish a way of life 'according to nature' (κατὰ φύσιν), that is to say, according to the *logos* of their nature (Larchet 1996: 437–94), and to fulfil the divine plan inscribed in it (Larchet 1996: 105–23).

It should also be noted that when one talks about the deification of the human being, it is not human nature, considered independently of the person, that is deified, but rather it is always concrete persons who are deified in the nature that belongs to them and which they hypostatize, and who personally by grace, in Christ and through the Spirit, attain to a particular—supernatural—mode *(tropos)* of existence of their nature, the *logos* (or essential definition) of which remaining nonetheless unchanged, furthermore making them neither gods by nature nor divine persons.

Finally, one should also recall that, although the place and role of the natures of Christ, of the nature of the human being and the divine energy, are fundamental in deification, this deification is always accomplished in the context of a personal relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, since both human and divine persons are inseparable from their nature. Christ, however, has the ability to take on human nature in his hypostasis, while human beings have the possibility of welcoming the divine energy into their own and being moved by it, such that they can say 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal. 2: 20), and feel in themselves the active presence of the Holy Spirit.

Suggested Reading

From the secondary sources listed below, we recommend Brune (1978), Dalmais (1957), Doucet (1979), Garrigues (1976), Gross (1938), de Halleux (1978), Larchet (1996), Sartorius (1965), Savvidis (1997), and Thunberg (1985).

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Notes:

([1]) De Halleux 1973, 1974, 1975, 1980, and 1981; Brune 1978, 1992; Doucet 1979, 1985; Thunberg 1985: 52–3, 137–43; Larchet 1996: *passim*, 2005, and 2008.

([2]) Sherwood 1955b: 164–6; Garrigues 1976: 107–12, 143–7; Doucet 1979: 278–9; Heinzer 1980; Dalmais 1984; Thunberg 1995: 415–18; Larchet 1996: 141–51, 265–73, 347–55, 605–8; Skliris 2013: 444–9.

([3]) As in the phrase τρόπος [τῆς] ὑπάρξεως: *Amb.Io*. 62, PG 91. 1400D–1401A; *Myst*. 23, Boudignon 2011: 53. 856–7, or in the expression τρόπος τοῦ πῶς ὑφεστάναι (*Amb.Th*. 1, Janssens 2002: 7. 34–5) when applied to the trinitarian hypostases.

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([4]) See the quotation in this section beginning, 'Indeed this is exactly what he did …', where many other examples of the same type are provided.

([5]) Lossky 1944: 141–2; Thunberg 1995: 23–36, 46–7, 59, 430; Meyendorff 1975: 54, 220–1; Dalmais 1980: 840; Piret 1983: 39–351; Doucet 1985: 389; Larchet 1996: 333–46.

([6]) The following excerpts, listed in chronological order, show the stability of Maximus' position in this regard throughout his œuvre: *Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 29. 41–3; *Amb.Io*. 36, PG 91. 1289C–D; *Amb.Io*. 42, PG 91. 1320A; *Q.Thal*. 22, scholium 3, Laga–Steel 1980: 143. 11–145. 17; *Q.Thal*. 54, Laga–Steel 1980: 459. 275–86; *Q.Thal*. 61, Laga–Steel 1990: 91. 106–8; *Amb.Th*. 3, Janssens 2002: 11. 29–34; *Amb.Th*. 5, Janssens 2002: 22. 51–3; *Ep. 2.Th.*, Janssens 2002: 37. 12–15, 38. 19–25; *Opusc*. 4, PG 91. 60B–C, 61B; *Opusc*. 8, PG 91. 101A–C, 105C; *Opusc*. 20, PG 91. 236D, 237A; *Opusc*. 6, PG 91. 68C; *Opusc*. 7, PG 91. 77C, 81C–D; *Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 189C–D; *Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 32A; *Opusc*. 15, PG 91. 157A–B.

([7]) *Ep*. 24, PG 91. 612C–D; *Ep*. 9, PG 91. 445C; *Amb.Io*. 20, PG 91. 1237C–1240A; *Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1137C–D.

([8]) *Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1176A; *Amb.Io*. 50, PG 91. 1369A; *Amb.Io*. 63, PG 91. 1389B; *Amb.Io*. 65, PG 91. 1393A; *Myst*. 21, Boudignon 2011: 48. 770–2; *Q.Thal*., intro., Laga–Steel 1980: 37. 348–9; *Q.Thal*. 6, Laga–Steel 1980: 69. 28–33; *Q.Thal*. 22, Laga–Steel 1980: 141. 72–4; 141. 77–8; 143. 114–16; *Q.Thal*. 27, scholium 1, Laga–Steel 1980: 201. 1–4; *Q.Thal*. 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 61. 245–50; *Q.Thal*. 59, scholium 5, Laga–Steel 1990: 69. 32–4; *Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 237. 800–1; *Ep*. 19, PG 91. 589C; *Opusc*. 7, PG 91. 72A–B.

([9]) *Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 237. 800–1, *Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1088C; *Amb.Io*. 31, PG 91. 1280D.

([10]) *Amb.Io*. 20, PG 91. 1237A, B; 41, PG 91. 1308B; *Q.Thal*. 22, Laga–Steel 1980: 139. 40–3; *Ep*. 1, PG 91. 376A–B; *Ep*. 25, PG 91. 613D.

([11]) *Q.Thal*. 61, Laga–Steel 1990: 101. 295–7; *Q.Thal*. 61, 14 scholium, Laga–Steel 1990: 111. 71–3; *Q.Thal*. 61, scholium 15, Laga–Steel 1990: 111. 80–4; *Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1141A–B, 1144C; *Ep*. 24, PG 91. 609C–D; *Ep*. 43, PG 91. 640B–C; *Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1088C; *Th.oec*. 1. 47, PG 90. 1100C.

([12]) *QD* 61, Declerck 1982: 48. 8–11; *QD* 180, Declerck 1982: 123. 14–16; *Car*. 3. 25, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 154; *Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 70. 776–7; *Myst*. 21, Boudignon 2011: 48. 768–72; *Myst*. 24, Boudignon 2011: 68. 1122–5; *Q.Thal*. 65, Laga–Steel 1990: 281. 487–9; *Q.Thal*. 33, scholium 3, Laga–Steel 1980: 233. 13–14; *Th.oec*. 2. 88, PG 90. 1168A.

([13]) *Amb.Io*. 20, PG 91. 1237A; *Myst*. 21, Boudignon 2011: 48. 770; *Myst.* 24, Boudignon 2011: 68. 1123–4.

([14]) *Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1073D; *Amb.Io*. 10, PG 91. 1137B; *Q.Thal*. 40, scholium 2, Laga–Steel 1980: 275. 5–11; *Q.Thal*. 59, scholium 5, Laga–Steel 1990: 69. 32–4.

([15]) Dalmais 1972: 58; 1980: 840; and 1984: 289; Garrigues 1974b: 201–2; Heinzer 1980: 173–81, and 1982.

([16]) Dalmais 1948: 285; 1953: 140, 151, 158; 1961: 414, 418; and 1984: 289; Garrigues–Riou 1969–70: 312; Riou 1973: 136, 169, and 188–9; Garrigues 1970: 458–9; 1974a: 275–6, 286–95; and 1976: 114, 121, 123, and 185; Le Guillou in Garrigues 1976: 11; Heinzer 1980: 181–2; 1982: 170.

([17]) *Q.Thal*. 2, Laga–Steel 1980: 73.7–23; 13, Laga–Steel 1980: 95.9–17; 65, Laga–Steel 1990: 283.512–20; 285.549–53.

Jean-Claude Larchet

Jean-Claude Larchet, PhD and ThD, is an independent scholar at Strasbourg (France).

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Spiritual Anthropology in Ambiguum 7

Adam Cooper

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Abstract and Keywords

The lengthy *Ambigua ad Iohannem* 7 was occasioned by an old question concerning the purpose of the body and physicality in God's plan for human life, and unfolds therefore as a detailed discussion on spiritual anthropology and Maximus' vision of creaturely existence. It proposes a strikingly Christocentric anthropology according to which the Incarnation proleptically maps out, as it were, and newly actualizes in corporeal contours humanity's original transcendent vocation. The anthropological vision expressed here is not restricted to the terms provided by biblical theology, but draws creatively on the conceptual framework of both Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy in order to weave a compelling synthesis. Into the ontological interiority of the human being as created participation in God, Maximus inserts the dynamism of history and development, opening up a space to articulate human spiritual progress in terms of drama and discovery, freedom and fulfilment.

Keywords: Christocentric anthropology, freedom, spiritual progress, Platonism, Aristotle

THE lengthy *Amb.Io.* 7 (PG 91. 1068D–1101C) is most commonly mined for its insights on Maximus' metaphysics and cosmology. It contains expositions on some of the Confessor's classic formulations: the relation between the Logos and the λόγοι; the triad of being, movement, and rest; the distinction between the *logos* of being and the τρόπος of existence; the mutual reciprocity between God's Incarnation and human deification, and so on. Yet it is sometimes forgotten that the whole work is occasioned by an old question—in this instance raised by Gregory Nazianzen—concerning the purpose of the body and especially physical suffering in God's plan for human life, and unfolds therefore as a wide-ranging discussion on questions concerning spiritual progress and Maximus' vision for creaturely human existence. While it precedes the more schematic moral psychology of nature and will that arose in the context of later christological debate, it nonetheless proposes a strikingly Christocentric anthropology according to which the Incarnation proleptically 'maps out', as it were, and newly actualizes in corporeal contours humanity's original transcendent vocation. The anthropological vision expressed by Maximus here is not restricted to the terms provided by biblical theology, but draws creatively on the conceptual framework of both Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy in order to weave a striking synthesis. In this chapter, the term 'spiritual' anthropology is intended to reflect this convergence of theological, metaphysical, and existential registers. Into the ontological interiority of human being as created participation in God, Maximus inserts the dynamism of history and development, opening up a space to articulate human spiritual progress in the terms of desire and freedom and fulfilment. In turn, this human paradigm indicates a personal vocation with a cosmic goal, inasmuch as the human being represents a kind of 'second cosmos', a universe in miniature. The personal hope for an infinitely fulfilling fellowship with God that Maximus outlines in these reflections derives from a two-fold paradoxical conviction: that bodily life, while fraught with ambiguity, epitomizes the providential intervention of the Creator in history, and that, for all their natural finitude, human beings (p. 361) have been created freely to attain, through active reception and affective love, a gratuitously given infinite end.

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The Occasion for *Amb.Io*. 7

Given the importance of *Amb.Io.* 7 for anthropology, it is nonetheless equally vital to take account of the metaphysical ideas it contains, for it is in within the structure of those ideas and in their specific terms that Maximus proposes his anthropological insights. The difficulty begins with a question from Gregory Nazianzen's *Oratio* 14, *On Love for the Poor*, regarding the mysterious quality of bodily human existence. It is important to read the question, here marked in italics, within the context of Gregory's original oration:

> This wretched and low and faithless body: how I have been mated with it I do not know, nor how I am an image of God yet blended with clay. It makes war when healthy yet is vexed when warred upon. As a fellow servant I love it, and as an enemy I spurn it. As a fetter I flee it, and as a joint heir I am ashamed of it. I strive to weaken it, and have nothing else to use as a co-worker to attain the best—knowing for what I was made and that I must ascend to God through my actions.
>
> If I spare it as a co-worker, then I have no way to flee its insurrection, or to avoid falling from God, weighed down by its fetters which draw me down or hold me to the ground. It is a gracious enemy and a treacherous friend. O what union and estrangement! What I am afraid of I treat with respect, and what I love I have feared. Before I make war on it I reconcile myself to it, and before I make peace with it I set myself apart from it. *What is the wisdom surrounding me? What is this great mystery? Is it that God wills that we who are a portion of God and slipped down from above—in our struggle and battle with the body—that we should ever look to him, and that the weakness joined to us should serve to train our dignity*, lest exalted and lifted up on account of our high status we despise the Creator—that we should know that we are at the same time both the greatest and the lowest, earthly and heavenly, transitory and immortal, inheritors of light and fire—or of darkness, depending which way we incline? Such is our mixture and this is its reason, as it appears to me at least: that when we exalt ourselves because of the image, we may be humbled because of the dust. So whoever wants to contemplate these matters, let them do so, and we shall join them for spiritual exercises at a more opportune time.
>
> (*Or*. 14, 6–7, PG 35. 865A–865D)

This passage voices a personal sense of ambivalence towards the body and the conditions of physical life, one common in philosophical and ascetic traditions of Late Antiquity, both in the East and West. Baffled by the paradox of human sublimity and humility, Gregory seems to be wondering why we human beings were given a body, if it is true that we are essentially spiritual beings created for a heavenly life of union with God. His own answer is that the body keeps us humble, guarding us from the pride and presumption (p. 362) to which we are vulnerable on account of our spiritual kinship with the divine. Only in this lowly condition are human beings capable of recognizing their true identity and so of achieving their God-given destiny.

But in the context of Maximus' circumstances, a more acute problem had apparently arisen with the two phrases at the heart of Gregory's passage in which human beings are said to be 'a portion of God' (μοῖρα Θεοῦ) and 'slipped down from above'. Right at the beginning of his treatment of the difficulty, Maximus hints at what could be a real historical situation by explicitly citing and opposing a particular metaphysical doctrine which seems to have been uncritically adopted by certain (monastic?) contemporaries from non-Christian Greek philosophy and which claimed the support of these very two phrases from Gregory. Whether or not this doctrine was the same as that which in the sixth century had controversially been associated with the name of Origen of Alexandria, Maximus does not say. But since the specific historical provenance and intellectual genealogy of this doctrine have been singled out in numerous scholarly studies (Benevich 2009; Daley 1995; Dalmais 1961; Sherwood 1955b), only the briefest outline is needed here. Basically, it concerns the origin, nature, and status of human souls. According to the problematic interpretation cited and opposed by Maximus, human souls are said to have (a) pre-existed in a spiritual *henad*, that is, an original state of immobile unicity or oneness in God, (b) fallen and fragmented into differentiation via a process of satiety, loss of attention, and motion, and then finally (c) emerged into actual historic and material existence in the temporal event of generation. Taken at face value, the two phrases from Gregory appear more open to this interpretation.

Throughout his response Maximus is anxious to free Gregory from any misrepresentation, convinced that the passage addresses not the reason behind the Creation of bodies or souls, but the nature and purpose of the common hardships (ταλαιπωρία) ushered into the human situation by sin (PG 91. 1092A; 1093C). Initially,

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however, his concern is to expose the faulty metaphysics of the henadological doctrine. Against its problematic triadic order of rest or immobility (στάσις), motion (κίνησις), and generation or becoming (γένεσις), Maximus proposes an alternative metaphysics which begins with the actual genesis of different beings from nothing by divine Creation, proceeds to their natural motion and activity, and culminates in their final repose in God. Some of the passages in which he confronts this problem, expressing ideas partially repeated in *Ambiguum* 15 (PG 91. 1216A–1221B), come over as very technical and laden with difficult philosophical concepts. But Maximus' worry with the problematic doctrine is not merely philosophical, but soteriological, anthropological, and pastoral. He argues that the doctrine of the *henad*, which holds that 'stasis' or rest designates an actual original state from which rational beings fell through motion, fundamentally destabilizes the hope of eternal salvation in Christ inasmuch as it conceives this original state of union with God as metaphysically unstable. If it is true that rational beings once had a stable 'dwelling and foundation' in contemplating the absolute beauty of God, yet subsequently grew satiated with God's beauty and fell away from God, then given the same (p. 363) circumstances, Maximus contends, they will 'necessarily experience the same alterations in position indefinitely'. The implications are morally and existentially disastrous:

> For if the definition of someone's being is such that it enables him through experience to turn away once, then there is nothing to stop him from being able to do so again and again *ad infinitum*. But if rational beings are thus to be carried about and can neither possess nor hope for any place of rest or any abiding steadfastness in the good, what could be greater reason for despair?
>
> (PG 91. 1069C)

In Maximus' solution to the problem, as we shall see, the stable state of rest or union with God is placed not first in the metaphysical triad, but last, in keeping with the biblical doctrine of eternal Sabbath rest and the final recapitulation of all things in Christ the Son of the Father. In such a state, where our restless desire has finally found its ultimate goal in God, where God has become for us our 'all in all', there can be no falling away, no interruption of joy, no loss of deification.

This then constitutes the occasion and basic polemical thrust of *Ambiguum* 7. It is within this framework that Maximus not only proposes a coherent metaphysics of Creation, but takes the liberty of offering a more plausible reading of the contentious passage, and so sketches a constructive spiritual anthropology. Taking as its point of departure the universal human experience of physical suffering, this anthropology proceeds to a Christocentric vision of integral human deification in which all reality is implicated. For it is specifically through the human person that God has established the means of realizing the desire to be embodied in the diverse universe created by God.

The Metaphysics of Created Desire

These days, as a legacy of Baconian science, we have by and large lost a teleological view of the world, even if it is unavoidably presupposed in the evolutionary sciences. But the instinct for a teleological interpretation of reality goes back not just to the natural philosophy of Aristotle, for whom to define properly what a thing is one must refer to what it will eventually become (all things going to plan). It also goes back to the theology of the biblical book of Genesis, according to which all Creation, whose goodness consists in both its intrinsic value and purposive functionality, is ordered teleologically towards participation in the final goods of divine blessing and infinite Sabbath rest with God (Gen. 2: 1–4). All things come from God and are directed back—or rather, forward—to God for their fulfilment. In New Testament theology, the Incarnation of the Son of God was interpreted as the definitive appearance in history of Creation's final goal. Christ is 'the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end' (Rev. 22: 13). All things were created 'by him and for him' (Col. 1: 16). He is the archetypal 'image' on which humans were originally patterned, (p. 364) the eternal and uncreated image of the invisible Father, now revealed in these latter days (Col. 1: 15; Heb. 1: 3).

Early on in Christian tradition, this Christo-form correspondence between the beginning and end of things emerged as a basic theologoumenon. As Origen classically expressed it:

> The end is always like the beginning. Therefore, as there is one end of all things, so one must understand that there must be one beginning of all things. And as there is one end of many things, so from one beginning there arose many differences among things and kinds of things which, through the goodness of

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> God, and by being subject to Christ and united with the Holy Spirit, are restored to one end which is like the beginning.
>
> (*Princ.* 1. 6. 2)

Not surprisingly, the Sabbath metaphor became an especially rich resource of spiritual anthropology for the way it points to the human vocation to the infinite. In the Genesis Creation narrative, every day has a close, its 'evening and morning', except for the seventh. The seventh day is open-ended. It signals the ascent from the 'good' to the 'holy'. By stopping from their work and entering into God's rest on the seventh day, human beings begin to participate in the new Creation, the eternal 'eighth day', a resurrected mode of existence beyond nature and time. Sabbath thereby does not just speak to human beings about their limits, but about their transcendent calling to eternal communion with God.

Heir to this Christian way of interpreting the world, Maximus believed that all things at some deep level must manifest some latent or active tendency towards this eternal sabbatical goal. To that end he elaborated a number of metaphysical ideas that conceptually express this intrinsic structural relatedness of all things to God. In *Ambiguum* 7 these ideas constitute the foundation upon which he constructs his spiritual anthropology.

One of the first ideas arises from the discernment in all beings of an inner tendency which Maximus, following tradition, calls 'desire'. Desire is first of all a metaphysical term. It refers to the propulsive ontological force that constitutes the natural activity or 'motion' of all created beings, whether spiritual or physical, animate or inanimate. Its goal or end is the 'ultimate object of desire'. This ultimate object of desire is beautiful (καλόν), good (ἀγαθόν), lovable (ἐραστόν), and entirely desirable (ἑλκτικόν) for its own sake. It is not lovable simply as an alternative to some opposite (such as evil). Rather it 'inspires' movement in all things primarily by way of attraction, satisfying the desire of all who delight in it (PG 91. 1069CD). Maximus conceives the being of things as a kind of trajectory stretching from the first moment of their actual existence to their final fulfilment or completion in this ultimate object, which is nothing else than God their Creator.

Motion, too, is first of all a metaphysical idea. The term encapsulates the ontological condition that follows from having been generated out of non-being (ἐκ μὴ ὄντων). This condition is one marked by possibility. Passibility does not in the first instance refer to the capacity for physical pain, emotional affectivity, or moral weakness but to the contingent character of all finite beings. On account of their having been brought (p. 365) into being from non-being, created beings are not self-caused but reliant for their being and movement upon some cause other than themselves. In this respect, motion does not mean random change or undetermined flux, but purposeful and end-directed activity. Natural motion consists in a being's dynamic, actualizing unfolding towards its culminating goal which, when reached, results in 'rest', that is, the cessation of its properly natural, self-actualizing activity. Yet the presence of motion also indicates that the end has not yet been reached, that one's finality is still unrealized. Only possession of the ultimately desirable goal of one's being can terminate natural motion. Motion characterizes all creaturely existence between the first moment of becoming and the final goal in 'rest' (PG 91. 1069B; 1072B; 1073BC; cf. *Amb.Io.* 15, PG 91. 1217D).

A third idea concerns the much-studied notion of participation (see Tollefsen 2012, 2001, Portaru 2012a, 2012b, Perl 1991). In as much as they came to be 'from God', all things participate in God in ways proportionate to their varying natures and capacities. All are somehow different expressions of an original thought or intention in the mind of God, and are related to God as so many λόγοι to one Logos. However, only intelligent beings such as humans or angels warrant the attribution 'portion of God', for they uniquely have been created 'according to the very Logos who is in God and who is with God', and are able through desire and voluntary inclination to return to the one who is their beginning and cause (PG 91. 1080BC). These λόγοι, understood as God's intentional design for each kind of created being, constitute the metaphysical condition for a being's entire existence, from its initial generation right through to its final actualization (PG 91. 1081A). Though Maximus' elaborations on the *logoi* are sometimes complex (see Louth 2010; Tollefsen 2005: 48–87; Kattan 2003: 47–79; Blowers 1992a), at a most basic level they seem akin to what Aristotelian philosophy means by natures or forms. They are a limit concept, answering the question: what kind of thing is that? A thing's *logos* defines its basic what and wherefore, its essence and purpose, in relation to itself, to other beings, and to God (PG 91. 1081B). It can also function as a kind of natural law,[1] telling us in general terms what a thing *should* be, how it should (or should not) *act* relative to its God-given nature and design, even if for one reason or another it may in fact deviate from this 'natural' course. This is

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what Maximus means when he identifies the *logoi* as the stable ontological foundation for human existence and activity. More than giving just a conceptual description, they indicate the constitutive metaphysical substructure of our being, from which, in a sense, we cannot escape. If human beings find themselves 'slipped down' from God and out of kilter with him, it is because they have not moved in harmony with the ineradicable *logos* of their being which, when 'followed', directs them to the archetypal Logos whose impress they bear (PG 91. 1081C).

So far the terms discussed have been mostly metaphysical, understood as wise provisions within the grand scheme of divine providence (Croce–Valente 1982: 32–8; Moreschini 2003). They are applicable to all created beings, not just to human persons. What difference does being human make, and how does spiritual anthropology flow from all (p. 366) this? Two answers seem apposite. First, the movement proper to human beings is not only natural and metaphysical, but needs to be intelligently and freely willed. Secondly, the goal of human nature lies infinitely beyond the capacities of that nature, so much so that its actualization must be 'received' and 'suffered' rather than achieved or attained. Let us see how Maximus addresses these differences.

The Nature and Scope of Human Freedom

Having established the general ontological condition underlying all created beings (PG 91. 1069C–1073B), Maximus goes on to describe the implications for *rational beings*. Since they are generated from non-being, they too are motivated from their beginning by an innate metaphysical attraction towards their goal. But the way in which this movement unfolds is peculiar to them as rational beings. Maximus defines three stages: being, well-being, and eternal well-being. The first and third stages are exclusively attributable to God as creator and deifier. 'God is the giver of being and the gracious giver of eternal well-being, since God is beginning and end' (PG 91. 1073C). Even if, once I do exist, it is 'natural' (κατὰ φύσιν) for me to be, it remains the case that my being and my being eternal depend on an act of sheer divine gratuity. But the link between the two, the development from the initial movement (being) towards proper fulfilment (eternal being), a development which qualifies both as a 'being well', is voluntary (κατὰ γνώμην) and subject to my self-determination.[2]

Maximus illustrates this unfolding motion with an analogy in which he weaves together the steps involved in coming to grasp an intelligible object with the dynamics involved in affective love. The full grasping of an intelligible object begins with a basic sensible openness to it, which Maximus associates with the initial stirrings of *eros*. This in turn gives rise to a more intentional and affective inclination, starting with what Maximus calls the experience of ecstasy, which is the shift in one's centre of awareness provoked by another whose presence elicits my attention and calls for response. Drawn out of oneself in this way, one progresses from simple enchantment to a more intense and deliberate pursuit, which does not stop until one enters fully into the embrace of the desired object, where one is entirely penetrated and suffused by the beloved's energy, like air totally illuminated by light, or iron fully inflamed by fire (PG 91. 1073C–1076A).

Something akin to these affective dynamics is unfolding in 'the worthy' in relation to God, Maximus suggests, although the experience of participation in the good (p. 367) that fulfills us far surpasses anything we can know or experience in this world. Above all, it is not an inevitable process, but calls for voluntary surrender, a freely willed self-subjection to the Father in the incarnate Son who, typologically representing deified humanity in himself, prayed, 'Yet not as I will but as you will' (Matt. 26: 39). St. Paul likewise, denying himself and refusing to stake a claim on his own life any more, exclaimed, 'For I myself live no longer; Christ lives in me instead' (Gal. 2: 20). Far from negating human freedom and self-mastery (αὐτεξούσιον), Maximus is convinced that this path alone guarantees it. A virtuous disposition which is naturally (κατὰ φύσιν) firm and steadfast, a surrender that is free and voluntary (γνωμικήν), are consequences of faithfully preserving our created relation to God, as image to archetype. It involves the positive intention to conform to one's original pattern, to be moved by none other than the source and goal of one's being, to make such a desire one's life project, so that eventually, interpenetrated wholly by one divine activity and delighting in one's ecstatic displacement from all natural limits, one is not able to will otherwise (PG 91. 1076A–C). Maximus later realized the possible monoenergistic implications of his expression here of 'one (divine) activity' and felt bound to qualify his terms (*Opusc.* 1, PG 91. 33A–B). His point was however, that perfected human freedom, unlike the vision of freedom proposed by the problematic henadological doctrine which defines it as the capacity to choose between opposites, is not liable to detraction from God. The fulfilment that we long for, the final vision of God, will be so utterly captivating, our willing surrender to God's all-embracing love and beauty so entire, that no alternative could possibly entice us away from him. That is not because there

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will *be* nothing besides God, but because 'nothing besides God will be known'. All things will be rendered so transparent with the deifying activity of God that it will no longer be possible to perceive them independently. Maximus says it is like the stars during the daytime: they are really there and shining, but they are rendered invisible in light of the more immediate and greater radiance of the sun. We shall at last see, understand, and love all things as God sees, understands, and loves them. In knowing them we shall know God, and in knowing God we shall know them (PG 91. 1077A–B; cf. 1 Cor. 13: 12).

Again, this same structure is reiterated in a discussion of another way of becoming 'a portion of God', namely, through the practice of virtue. Human goodness, for Maximus, is strictly relative to Christ, who is the substance of all the virtues (PG 91. 1081D–1084A). In this he echoes Augustine, for whom the virtues practised by pagans still fall short of their proper measure and fullness, which is love for God through faith in Christ Jesus. On the one hand Maximus believes virtue is 'natural', but this does not mean that excellent acts arise automatically or by a kind of animal instinct. In the case of free and intelligent beings, no general *logos* or natural inclination can provide an exhaustively adequate prescriptive formula for action. This is not only because of the almost infinite variety of particular moral situations faced by an almost infinite variety of different persons, situations that require prudent action which no general law can prescribe; it is also because the *logos* of human nature, unlike the *logoi* of non-spiritual beings, directs us towards a fulfilment whose (p. 368) actualization requires the deployment of powers infinitely beyond our natural inner resources. Our innate orientation towards the development of human and moral excellence needs to be catalysed by a deliberately appropriated synergy with the grace-empowered impulses of the Holy Spirit. Yet since human persons are 'naturally' rational and free beings, their progress in virtue requires not just blind obedience or coerced conformity but the exercise of 'good will and choice' (γνώμῃ τε καὶ προαιρέσει) whereby they 'become God and receive existence as God from God'. In this way, to the foundational goodness of being in the image of God, which belongs to every human being by nature, there is added—through the virtues and the appropriation of one's own beginning—the likeness to God, which comes to be acquired by human beings by choice. In such persons the apostolic word is fulfilled: 'in [God] we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17: 28). 'Being in God', they 'are' by the principle of being; 'moving in God', they 'are good' by the principle of well-being; 'living in God', they 'are God' by the principle of eternal well-being. Through these principles, divine designs, or manifestations of the divine will—by learning them, embracing them, and conforming to them—human persons 'place themselves in God alone, wholly imprinting and forming God alone in themselves, so that by grace they are God and are called God' (PG 91. 1084A–D).

No alternative to this God-given intention for human life can ever amount to anything more than a negation of our freedom and the diminishment of our spiritual constitution. There is no neutral ground. If human persons are not making choices that lead them—however fitfully—towards the realization of their divinely given vocation, they are slipping backwards, downwards, away from their real joy. As Maximus says elsewhere, 'the immobility of virtue is the beginning of vice'.[3] In terms reminiscent of Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa, for whom human nature always retains an intrinsic tendency to slip back towards non-being if not kept in being by a positive moral force, Maximus views the deliberately chosen rejection of the virtuous ascent to one's cause and beginning as an irrational programme of self-dissolution. Such a person 'enters a condition of unstable gyrations and fearful disorder of body and soul', for 'he had the ability to direct the steps of his soul unswervingly to God', but 'voluntarily exchanged what is better, his true being, for what is worse, non-being' (PG 91. 1084D–1085A). While the exercise and development of true human freedom are rarely easy, the path of virtue should not be identified as intrinsically difficult or one always involving a lengthy and arduous process of decision-making. In fact, the closer one is to God, the clearer and more acute are one's moral vision and subsequent discernment of the good. By contrast, in the ignorance and hesitation typical of ethical investigation (ζήτησις) 'lies the possibility of stumbling and going wrong' (PG 91. 1088A).

(p. 369) The Trinitarian Destiny

Maximus' interpretation of virtue is, like Augustine's, fundamentally Christocentric, but is his interpretation of the divine image in human beings also trinitarian? Louth (1996: 211) has noted that the notion of a trinitarian image in human beings 'never attained the influence' in Byzantine theology 'that Augustine's conception exercised in Western medieval theology', while von Balthasar (2003: 100–1) characterized the few references he found on the topic in Maximus' writings as 'hasty' and 'incidental'. In *Amb.Io.* 7 we have only one clear statement: the human intellect (νοῦς), reason (λόγος), and spirit (πνεῦμα) are analogously related to the divine intellect, reason, and

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spirit. The intended correspondence is not merely structural, but dynamically ordered towards eventual assimilation, so that 'our entire self will wholly pass over to God as an image to its archetype' (PG 91. 1088A).

Other passages confirm the dynamism in Maximus' understanding of the analogy.[4] In two of them, *Amb.Th.* 1 and *Amb.Io.* 23, Maximus explains a curious statement by Gregory Nazianzen which attributes movement to the Trinity: 'monad is moved to dyad and comes to rest in triad' (*Or*. 29. 2). According to Maximus, the motion in question represents a human epistemological dynamic: 'The blessed Trinity is moved in the human intellect (νοῦς) … The Trinity teaches it immediately at its first movement the aspect of oneness … But then it leads the intellect on to perceive the ineffable divine fecundity of this oneness, lest it should ever be forced to suppose the Good bereft of the consubstantial, objective word and wisdom or sanctifying power …' (*Amb.Io.* 23, PG 91. 1260D; cf. *Amb.Th.* 1, Janssens 2002: 40. 1–41. 46). Maximus is here describing the movement in human knowledge from the *fact* of God's existence, which is unitary, to the 'how' or mode of God's existence which is triadic. God is first perceived in simple unity, a perception that corresponds to the initial intellectual act by which any of us grasps simply 'that' something is. But then, lest God be thought of only in terms of a static, unfecund fact, the mind is 'led on' as it were to perceive God in the triadic modality: God's fecund self-diffusion in the second (word/wisdom) and third persons (sanctifying power). In the human person, this shift involves a movement of reason (λόγος) and spirit (πνεῦμα), a filling out, as it were, of the human intellect and a perfecting of the triadic image of God in the soul. Until then the human person remains somehow incomplete, perhaps affirming 'that' God is and acknowledging some unitary divine and transcendent source of being, but falling short of that intimate apprehension of God as self-interpreted—as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Only this illuminating self-communication awakens in the human person a full response and effectually elicits the unifying perfection of one's spiritual, rational, and intellectual powers. Only in this way does the created image fully conform and return to its uncreated archetype.

(p. 370) In *Amb.Io.* 10 this three-fold assimilating movement is further linked to ascetic life and actual spiritual practice. The picture here is less of a filling out than a contraction: only when the human intellect moves beyond matter and sense, when by reason and contemplation it overcomes the disparate and divisive impulses of the so-called concupiscible and incensive powers, does it fully reflect—as undivided mind, *logos*, and spirit—the archetypically simple and undivided unity which is the Trinity (PG 91. 1196A).

With these observations in mind, one is able to make better sense of the emphasis on the *totality* of human penetration by God that follows the reference in *Amb.Io.* 7 to the trinitarian analogy. Those who have kept themselves 'wholly' chaste become veritable instruments of divinity. As the soul permeates the whole body, so 'the fullness of God permeates them wholly'. 'Wholly infused with the fullness of God' and 'wholly free from the marks of corruption that stain the present age', 'the whole human, as the object of divine action, is deified … remaining wholly human in soul and body by nature, becoming wholly God in body and soul by grace' (PG 91. 1088BC). As the entire triadic dimensions of the soul are assimilated to the Trinity, so the entire body is assimilated to the soul, each becoming an instrument or member of the superior power it properly expresses and reflects. God's perichoretic inherence within the human person becomes as complete as the suffusion of air with light, or of glowing steel with fire (PG 91. 1088D). The presence of the image of God in human beings is hereby seen to express a far-reaching vocation whose author and goal is the holy Trinity and whose final realization is in a sense indistinguishable from God. The wise combining of both dust of the earth and breath of God to make humanity reveals God's original intention to fill all reality with bountiful goodness. In the synthetic structure of the human being is embodied in living contours the Creator's desire that all the spheres of reality which are naturally separated from one another 'return to a unity as they converge together in the one human being. When this happens God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 28)' (PG 91. 1092C; cf. 1093D).

This expressly Christian and theological anthropology opens the way for Maximus to recover a positive role for the neo-Platonic formula 'dwelling and foundation' (μονὴ καὶ ἵδρυσις), used by the protagonists of the henadological doctrine to express the co-natural ontological community with God enjoyed by rational souls in their pre-temporal state (PG 91. 1069A). Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite had earlier employed the formula, though somewhat hesitantly, with reference to the intra-trinitarian unity.[5] More confident was his application of the term ἵδρυσις in his commentary on the rite of burial to describe the unshakeable stability of the faithful in God after death: 'Sacred souls who in this life can tumble into sin will acquire in their rebirth an unshakable conformity to God. And the purified bodies yoked to and travelling with these same souls … will [also] enjoy the reward of the resurrection and the same unshakably divine life'.[6] With a similar **(p. 371)** eschatological focus, Maximus uses the formula in his response to Thalassius about the eventual destiny of those who have lived according to their God-given *logos*: in

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contrast to the unrighteous, who end up in a kind of 'nowhere', they will come to inhabit God as their 'place' and 'dwelling and foundation' (μονήν τε καὶ ἵδρυσιν).[7] In *Amb.Io.* 20 (PG 91. 1237D) Maximus again uses the formula to expound the meaning of the term 'assumption' (ἀνάληψις) in Gregory Nazianzen's explanation (in *Or.* 28. 20) of Paul's rapture to the third heaven. 'Assumption' indicates the highest degree of intimacy with God after 'progress' (πρόοδος), while 'ascension' (ἀνάβασις) indicates 'the dwelling and foundation in God'. By dissociating the formula 'dwelling and foundation' from the notion of an actual pre-existent state Maximus is able in *Amb.Io.* 7 to propose a secure dwelling and foundation in the Trinity as a real and energizing hope, in keeping with the promise of Christ (cf. John 14: 2, 23). 'It is impossible for those who have found the stability that comes from having their dwelling-place in God to turn away from God' (PG 91. 1089A).

The other way Maximus speaks of this final destiny in trinitarian assimilation and stable indwelling is with the notion of 'rest'. As already mentioned, finite beings are characterized by natural motion and purposeful activity towards their end. As long as they are on that journey, they manifest a certain metaphysical restlessness. Maximus finds this metaphysical doctrine confirmed in the scriptures (PG 91. 1072D): 'the tree of life' has not yet been eaten (Gen. 3: 22); the souls of the saints still yearn for the satisfaction of seeing God in glory (Ps. 17: 15; 42: 2); the bodily resurrection is an object of urgent personal longing not yet attained in its completion (Phil. 3: 11–12); the hope of entering God's promise of Sabbath rest remains an as yet unrealized possibility held out to faith (Heb. 4: 10; 11: 39); Christ's offer of rest to the weary and heavy burdened belongs to a future actualization (Matt. 11: 28).

But even though this 'rest' spells the fulfilment of creaturely desire and the termination of natural activity, Maximus conceives it as an 'ever-moving rest' (στάσις ἀεικίνητος), and thus altogether different from the problematic experience of satiety. Satiety is basically a lack of appetite or desire. It results from either indulging oneself with created goods that cannot fulfil us, like goods of taste or sense, or from pursuing objects that are base or repugnant. In the former case, the senses and appetite soon become satisfied: desire wanes, and the good enjoyed loses its immediate attractiveness. In the latter case, since the appetitive or moral object fundamentally conflicts with our well-being, desire turns into loathing and disgust.

By contrast with all created things, however, God is infinitely beautiful. In elaborating a doctrine of an eschatological 'perpetual progress' Maximus follows Gregory of Nyssa's proposal of a never-ending stretching (ἐπέκτασις) of spiritual desire in proportion to the infinite desirability of its object. In Gregory's words:[8]

> The first good is in its nature infinite, and so it follows of necessity that the participation in the enjoyment of it will be infinite also, for more will always be in the process of being (p. 372) grasped, and yet something beyond that which has been grasped will always be discovered, and this search will never overtake its object, because its fund is as inexhaustible as the growth of that which participates in it is ceaseless.
>
> (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eun.* 1. 291, Jaeger 1960: 112)

So too for Maximus, the person who sets his desire on such infinite beauty can never be fully satisfied. His spiritual appetite undergoes a kind of infinite expansion in keeping with the infinite choice-worthiness of its divine object (PG 91. 1089BC). Maximus' exposition is primarily theoretical, but we can imagine the resulting experience in terms of a paradoxical ecstasy of 'too much' and 'never enough'. This is why 'the state that comes from contemplating God and enjoying the gladness it gives is rightly called pleasure, rapture, and joy'. Pleasure, because it answers to the profoundest yearnings of our nature; rapture, because by actively receiving a power from outside ourselves we become capable of acts whose efficacy far exceeds that of acts proceeding from our natural powers; and joy, because nothing can negate it, whether some defect (like past sorrows) or some excess (like satiety). Indeed, he concludes, 'joy is the most appropriate term to refer to the life that is to come', for it consists in actual possession of the one whom in this life we have loved and longed for (PG 91. 1088D–1089A).

The Meaning of Physical Suffering

It is to be recalled that *Amb.Io.* 7 was occasioned by an interpretative controversy, at the heart of which lay a passage by Gregory Nazianzen on the mystery of physical existence, a question of abiding importance for theological anthropology (Cooper 2005). The picture it paints of the human condition is highly existential: it is one of being caught up in evils not of our own making, of being thrown into existence and somehow expected to forge from it some kind of meaningful life. Above all, Gregory is perplexed about the meaning of the physical body, which

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he experiences paradoxically as both ally and alien, friend and foe. Given that human beings are intelligent spirits, created in God's image and called 'through desire and intense love' to fellowship with God the creator (PG 91. 1092B), what possible positive purpose does the body serve, seeing that it so obviously drags us downwards, prone as it is to fatigue and sickness, ageing, death, and decay, and by means of its senses presents to the mind innumerable distractions from the pure and unalloyed contemplation of intelligible realities?

Maximus only begins his positive explanation of the passage relatively late in the difficulty, drawing more widely on the Theologian's works to illuminate the obscure text (PG 91. 1092A).[9] He argues that Gregory is trying to get to the heart of the problem, not of (p. 373) bodily Creation or existence per se, but of human suffering, especially the sufferings that arise from sin and moral ineptitude. 'He is explaining whence this condition of misery came to be, for what reason, by whom and for whose sake.' Maximus finds in Gregory's musings on these sufferings an occasion for discerning the providential wisdom of God at work. As a corollary of death, suffering bears both a punitive and educative function. The biblical Adam's sin delineates the paradigmatic shape of sin in all human beings: all are drawn to idolize created and sensible phenomena, to absolutize the contingent. Death, like the physical suffering that normally heralds and attends it, is the punishment that corresponds to this irrational attachment of the human spirit to material things, since it acts as a forceful boundary, preventing the permanent pursuit of a goal that debases our spiritual stature and detracts from our transcendent calling. Yet this punishment is at the same time a way out, as it were. For, '[i]t is only when we have been taught by suffering that we who love non-being can regain the capacity to love what is.' We may feel ourselves to be mere playthings in the hands of the gods, objects of ridicule in a world of change and deception: 'Before something can be laid hold of it flees and escapes our grasp.' But there is purpose in this, for we quickly learn not to get too attached to finite pleasures, but to turn our attention to things that endure. In the end, Gregory's words 'show that the fall into sin can become the occasion for God in [God's] wisdom to work out our salvation' (PG 91. 1092D–1093C).

Throughout this discussion, the body is objectified variously as instrument, neighbour, and fellow-servant. Through its association with the soul and its collusion in the practice of virtue, the body is drawn into intimate partnership with God. But far from giving way to any kind of anthropological dualism, Maximus affirms the essential unity of the human composite, invoking the Aristotelian 'principle of relation' (ὁ τοῦ πρός τι λόγος).[10] This principle applies to parts of a whole that come into existence simultaneously to constitute a single substance. The insistence on *simultaneous* (ἅμα) generation thus becomes all-important, since if one were to pre-exist the other, their *synthesis* to form a new being would either involve a necessary alteration in their own substantial being or else imply the endless perpetuation of reincarnation or reanimation. Maximus rejects both these hypotheses outright, arguing instead for the composite unity of human nature: the soul or body of a particular person, as parts of a whole, can only be considered in relation to that whole person:

> Now after the death of the body, the soul is not simply called 'soul' without qualification, but is called the soul of a human being, indeed, the soul of a particular human being. For even after the body, it retains by relation the whole as its own form, since the whole human being is predicated of an individual part. It is the same with the body which, though mortal by nature, is, by virtue of its Creation, not independent. (p. 374) For the body is not simply called 'body' after its separation from the soul, even if it is corruptible and naturally returns to the elements from which it is constituted. Like the soul, it too retains by relation the whole as its own form, since the whole human being is predicated of an individual part.
>
> (PG 91. 1101B)

Soul and body, then, are necessarily and permanently related to one another by virtue of their simultaneous coming-into-being to constitute a new human being—as parts of a composite substantial form. Even at death when they are temporarily separated, each can only be spoken of in relation to the whole person whose body or soul it is. Nevertheless, their natural differences remain, a fact implying that their relation to one another will not be one of equals. The corporeal body, utterly incapable of self-sufficiency per se, remains 'the instrument of the intelligent soul', for:

> the whole soul, permeating the whole body, gives to it both life and movement, since the soul by nature is simple and incorporeal. The soul does this in the whole body and in each of its members without being divided or split up by the body, since it is natural for the body to admit the soul according to the body's natural underlying capacity to receive the soul's activity. Present throughout, the whole soul binds

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> together the members variously capable of receiving it in a manner commensurate with the body's preservation as a unit.
>
> (PG 91. 1100A–B)

This asymmetrical integrity of the whole human person provides for Maximus a model with which to propose a finally christological and ecclesiological interpretation of Gregory's 'portion of God'. 'Portion' in relation to God is analogous to 'member' in relation to a body. In the Christian Gospel of the incarnate Son of God and the Pauline identification of the church as the body of Christ, Maximus discovers 'a wholly new way of being human' that at the same time perfectly realizes 'God's good purpose for us before the ages', inasmuch as God predestined all human beings 'to be in Christ as members of his body' (PG 91. 1097B). In 'the mystery of the mystical sojourn of God with humanity', the original pattern (λόγος) for human nature unfolds in the form of an utterly new and unexpected modality (καινότερος τρόπος). The apparent absurdity of a life hounded by suffering and bounded by death is finally only resolved in this new and 'other way' of being human, 'more marvellous and more befitting of God than the first, and as different from the former as what is above nature is different from what is according to nature' (PG 91. 1097CD). Through the Incarnation, precisely the body with all its attendant vulnerabilities has become the opening by which God has provided for fallen human beings, spread across time and space, the means to begin their spiritual restitution.

There is one final analogical meaning of physical suffering which no adequate account of Maximus' spiritual anthropology could overlook. It has to do with the way the Confessor envisions final deification not principally as a human achievement but as a 'suffering' or willingly received experience of divine activity; for having been moved and finally come to rest in the perfect end that is without end, it belongs to creatures (p. 375) 'to suffer (παθεῖν) that which is without definition, though not to be or become such in essence' (PG 91. 1073B). The situation is again predictably paradoxical: human finality lies in simultaneous ἀπάθεια and παθεῖν; the fulfilment of nature is found in the passage beyond nature; deification is an intensely joyous rapture effected by an 'ecstatic power' which introduces that which suffers (τὸ πάσχον) to that which acts (τὸ ποιοῦν) (PG 91. 1088D). Behind such insights we may discern the old Stoic, Philonic, and neo-Platonic contrast between activity and passivity, as well as Ps-Dionysius' preference for the actual experience or 'suffering' of divine things over simply knowing *about* them.[11] Although there always lies in this emphasis the danger of negating human agency, it remains an unavoidable feature in Maximus' account of deification, a mystery he regards as irreducibly gratuitous, conferred by divine *fiat* (κατὰ θέσιν), and by no means the product of any naturally human receptive potency (δύναμις δεκτική). For if it were, 'it would no longer be by grace but the manifestation of an activity proceeding from natural power … And how deification would place the deified person outside himself, if it be comprehended within the bounds of nature, I do not see' (*Amb.Io.* 20, PG 91. 1237A–B). Maximus could hardly be clearer: nothing created is by nature capable of effecting its own deification. 'For it is intrinsic and peculiar to divine grace alone to bestow deification proportionately on beings, for only divine grace illuminates nature with supernatural light and elevates nature beyond its proper limits in excess of glory.'[12] Here, as we have already seen, the end and the beginning converge: deification resembles a Creation out of nothing, in that both 'being' and 'being God' are 'from God'. Notwithstanding the role of the will in determining one's well-being, the 'eternal being' of the spiritual creature, like its first appearance on the stage of existence, is contingent upon nothing, that is, nothing except an unelicited act of sheer divine benevolence. Objectively speaking, of course, Maximus knows Creation and deification to be two degrees within the one dynamic event of participation in God. The gradual expansion of one mode to the other is qualified by the drama of history, the progress of personal development, and the mystery of divine–human synergy. To the amazed subject, however, all is perceived as pure, unfathomable gift and gratefully welcomed as the eternally intended accomplishment of God's Christ-embodied love.

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Notes:

([1]) On Maximus' doctrine of natural law, see *Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1164C; *Q.Thal.* 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 233–9. 725–812; von Balthasar 2003: 291–314.

([2]) The same idea is expressed in *Amb.Io.*10, PG 91. 1116B. Maximus defines γνώμη as an individual 'mode of use'

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of the common capacity to will, and not a principle of nature (*DP*, PG 91. 308D). See Renczes 2003: 271–82; Thunberg 1995: 213–26.

([3]) *Q.Thal.* 17, Laga–Steel 1980: 113, 34–8; cf. *QD* 173, Declerck 1982: 120 1–16, where Maximus acknowledges the possibility of abandoning one's own *logos* (ἀφεὶς τὸν ἴδιον λόγον).

([4]) See *Amb.Io.* 10, PG 91. 1196A; *QD* 105, Declerck 1982: 80. 24–6; *QD* 136, Declerck 1982: 97. 3–12; Sherwood 1955b: 37–45; Thunberg 1995: 129–32.

([5]) *Div.nom.* 2. 4, Suchla 1990: 127; Luibheid 1987: 61. Ps-Dionysius introduces this formula μονή καὶ ἵδρυσις with an apology ('if one may put it so'), which Rorem interprets as a reference to the source of this language in neo-Platonism. The term μονή is the first term in the neo-Platonic triad of remaining (μονή), procession, and return (Luibheid 1987: 61 n.114).

([6]) *Hier.eccl.* 7. 1. 1, Heil–Ritter 1991: 120–1; Luibheid 1987: 249–50.

([7]) *Q.Thal.* 61, Laga–Steel 1990: 105. 345–9.

([8]) For Maximus' development of the idea, see Blowers 1992b. Also cf. *Amb.Io.* 67, PG 91. 1401A; *Q.Thal.* 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 53. 131; *Q.Thal.* 65, Laga–Steel 1990: 285, 545.

([9]) Besides drawing on the wider context of Gregory's *Or.* 14, Maximus quotes from *Or.* 17. 4; *Or.* 38. 11; *Or.* 39. 12–13.

([10]) Moreschini (2003: 637) locates the background of Maximus' discussion here in Aristotle's definition of the soul as 'the first actuality' (ἐντελέχεια ἡ πρώτη) of a natural body potentially possessing life' (*De anima* 2. 412a). The 'principle of relation', however, is from Aristotle's *Categoriae* 2. 1b, 7. 6ab.

([11]) *Div.nom.* 2.9, Suchla 1990: 134; Luibheid 1987: 65. See also Sherwood 1955b: 133 n.19. Later, Maximus rejected the attempt made in support of monoenergistic Christology to exploit the contrast between divine activity and creaturely passivity and to reduce it to a metaphysical principle (*Opusc.* 28, PG 91. 352A; *DP,* PG 91. 349C–D).

([12]) *Q.Thal.* 22, Laga–Steel 1980: 141. 93–8; cf. also *Amb.Io.* 15, PG 91. 1237A–B; *Opusc.* 1, PG 91. 33A–36A.

Adam Cooper

Adam G. Cooper is a senior lecturer in theology at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne, Australia.

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Mapping Reality Within the Experience of Holiness

Doru Costache

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Abstract and Keywords

By revisiting *Amb.Io.* 41, *Q.Thal.* 48, and parallel passages of Maximus' works, the author endeavours to comprehend the prologue of *Amb.Io.* 41. This puzzling passage, the object of several analyses in modern times, depicts five divisions and unions of reality—a representation which, according to Maximus, draws on the mystical tradition of the saints. Costache proposes that, even when outlining his cosmological theory, as throughout all his writings, the Confessor was primarily interested in mapping the content of holy or ascetic life. Furthermore, the author proposes that his worldview was conditioned by the experience of holiness, to which he himself was no stranger. These propositions are founded upon the prologue in question, finding numerous endorsements within the two classical *loci* mentioned above. Together with arguing for the author's two propositions, in this chapter he will address aspects so far ignored within the Maximian theory of everything.

Keywords: holiness, saints, divisions of reality, cosmology

THE prologue of Amb.Io. 41 (PG 91. 1304D) outlines Maximus the Confessor's theory of everything (Costache 2011: 27–30), which, drawing on the mystical tradition of the saints, depicts five divisions and unions of reality. Scholars have long grappled with the intricacies of this construct[1] but the Confessor's enigmatic claim that its sources are traditional is yet to receive proper attention—despite attempts to discuss the anonymous saints evoked in the *Ambigua* (Sherwood 1955b: 9–10). I endeavour to make sense of the puzzling prologue by revisiting *Amb.Io.* 41, *Q.Thal.* 48, and parallel passages from the early 630s. I propose that, even when he outlined his cosmological theory, the Confessor was primarily interested in mapping the content of holy life (Louth 1996: 22, 33–46).

Furthermore, I propose that his worldview was conditioned by the experience of holiness, which he must have beheld in the contemporary ascetics and to which he himself was no stranger. My propositions are founded precisely upon the prologue in question, and find numerous endorsements within the two classical *loci*, namely, *Amb.Io.* 41 and *Q.Thal.* 48. Together with arguing for my two propositions, in what follows I shall address aspects so far ignored about the Maximian theory of everything.

(p. 379) The Expanded Theory (*Amb.Io.* 41)

Maximus perceived reality, humanity's wide habitat, as consisting of various strands of being, which are divinely conditioned to reach higher levels of complexity and coherence. The classical reference for this depiction of reality is *Amb.Io.* 41 (PG 91. 1304D–1316A). Sometimes reduced to its anthropological significance (Sherwood 1955b: 10) and sometimes ignored (Sherwood 1955a: 47–51, 63–70; Sherwood 1955b: 228), *Amb.Io.* 41 depicts the Maximian worldview in all its amplitude. Beginning with a saying from Gregory the Theologian, to which I shall return, the chapter can be roughly divided into five parts, namely, the prologue and the five divisions (PG 91. 1304D–1305A); the project of the five unions (PG 91. 1305A–1308C); the Fall, its divisive nature, and the five

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syntheses accomplished by Christ (PG 91. 1308C–1312B); the factors that make unification possible (PG 91. 1312B–1313B); and the interpretation of the initial Gregorian saying (PG 91. 1313C–1316A). In the following, we are concerned only with the first three parts.

The Five Divisions

The theory begins by recording five layers of reality, each consisting of as many dichotomies or polarities. The passage of interest (PG 91. 1304D–1305B) is placed directly after the very brief prologue of the chapter, which refers to the wisdom of the saints as the source of this worldview. The text reads as follows.

> The saints … say that the reality (ὑπόστασιν) of all the beings that are subject to becoming bears within itself five divisions (πέντε διαιρέσεσι). The first … separates (διαιροῦσαν) the entire created nature … from the uncreated nature … The second is that according to which the entire being that has received existence from God by Creation is divided (διαιρεῖται) into intelligible and sensible. The third is that by which the sensible being is divided (διαιρεῖται) into sky and earth. The fourth is that by which the earth is divided (διαιρεῖται) into paradise and the inhabited land (οἰκουμένη). And the fifth is that by which the human being, like a comprehensive workshop of everything and which mediates physically between the edges of all polarities … is divided (διαιρεῖται) into male and female.

The terms for the elements that constitute the five divisions, we shall see, are identical to those utilized for the five syntheses within *Amb.Io*. 41 and *Q.Thal.* 48. Structurally, furthermore, these texts mirror each other perfectly. Whereas the five unions begin with the closest one to us, referring to humankind, then move through increasingly wider horizons—terrestrial, cosmic, and the ensemble of Creation—towards the encompassing perspective of a reality that is created and uncreated, the above passage begins from the vantage point of the created and the uncreated, and then progresses through narrower concentric circles to the closest one to us, represented by humankind (Lossky 2002: 108). We shall see later that this symmetry is deliberate and meaningful.

(p. 380) Our passage enunciates the five polarities concisely, insisting on the first and the last ones. The first dichotomy consists in the ultimate ontological rift between uncreated and created, signified by the ignorance (ἄγνοιαν) of the Creation regarding the ineffable principle (λόγον … ἀῤῥητον) of this division (PG 91. 1305A); the second one refers to the heterogeneity of the created domain, which includes the intelligible and the sensible;[2] the third one is found within the sensible realm, and refers to the sky and the earth; the fourth distinguishes on earth the inhabited land, or civilization, and paradise, or the spiritual experience; and the fifth one is the anthropological, gender-marked division, at the level of which, according to von Balthasar (2003: 199), 'the differentiation and multiplicity of the world, which has progressed to an extreme degree, takes its first turn towards unity.' The first dichotomy, ontological in nature, is the strongest whilst the other four, unfolding within the order of Creation, are weaker, structural in nature.

Contrary to what scholars sometimes assert (Thunberg 1995: 373, 381; Thunberg 1985: 81–3), in *Amb.Io.* 41 none of the five divisions and the tensions they entail are caused by the Fall (Riou 1973: 147); in turn, *Q.Thal.* 48 treats the five unions exclusively as saving stages of a fallen Creation. True, *Amb.Io.* 41 itself does not discuss the nature of all the polarities, yet it makes clear that, although sharpened by sin (PG 91. 1308C), they are by design—another sign of the flowing nature of the Creation (Blowers 2012b: 207–10). Symptomatically, later on *Amb.Io.* 41 (PG 91. 1305C) uses the term 'distance' (διάστημα), typical for the Nyssenian discourse (Jaeger 1960: 246. 14–22), as an overall dimension of the Creation. For instance, in addressing the first dichotomy, the saint mentioned a factor which 'naturally (φυσικῶς) separates [the elements] from one another, in no way permitting their union into one essence (εἰς μίαν οὐσίαν ἕνωσιν)' or their convergence into 'one and the same principle' (τόν ἕνα καί τόν αὐτόν … λόγον) (PG 91. 1305A). The first polarity is therefore caused by the natural incommensurability of the principles underlying the created and the uncreated.

Keeping the proportions, since no other dichotomy is as strong as the first one, certainly other principles are responsible for the rest of the divisions, for which reason they are designated by the same verb (διαιροῦσαν, διαιρεῖται). Moreover, the same principles appear as instrumental towards the five syntheses both within *Amb.Io*. 41 and *Q.Thal.* 48.[3] The result is that, due to their principles, at once differentiating and unifying, the opposite elements of the five polarities remain dissimilar whilst united, and likewise they associate without their differences being obliterated; this is a common feature of Maximian ontology (von Balthasar 2003: 154–7). We shall discover later that, whilst the differences remain intact, within the unifying process the contrary elements nevertheless

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reach higher levels of coherence and complexity.

The unfolding of the five dichotomies reveals an interesting blend of scriptural and cultural elements. Indeed, within a markedly scriptural framework as represented by the (p. 381) first division (see Genesis 1: God and the Creation), the fourth one (see Genesis 2–3: the paradise and the outside land), and the fifth one (see Genesis 1: male and female), the narrative accommodates aspects from the ancient cosmologies. For instance, the second polarity, namely, the duality inherent in the Creation, coincides with the ultimate Platonic division of the intelligible and the sensible. Likewise, the third one refers to the Aristotelian division of reality, which mainly comprises the sensible domain, subdivided into sky and the sublunar region of the earth. The ease with which the Confessor included and developed such cultural elements within a fundamentally scriptural worldview (Bradshaw 2010: 813), proves that at the time of its elaboration the Maximian construct found those elements fully assimilated within the Christian Hellenic tradition. Notoriously, both Gregory the Theologian's *Or.* 38. 10. 1–14 (Moreschini 1990: 122–4) and Gregory of Nyssa's *C.Eun*. 1. 270–1 (Jaeger 1960: 105. 19–106. 6) included Plato's highest division of being. Nevertheless, when considered from within the scriptural framework, this multi-level depiction of reality tells a familiar story—at least when the scriptural narrative is itself traditionally mediated.

Indeed, the whole construct can be read as centred on the human inhabitants of the cosmic house, signified by the word οἰκουμένη (the inhabited land is the world assimilated by humankind, humanized and perceived as a house), similar to Gregory of Nyssa's interpretation of Genesis 1 as describing the palace where the king was meant to live, in *Opif*. 2 (PG 44. 132D–133B). Maximus' preference for the word οἰκουμένη instead of κόσμος (the world, the ecosystem, the cosmic milieu) may signify more than a single element among the ten constituents of the polarized reality: it could be a metaphor of the universe as cradle of and house for humanity.

Interestingly, although Maximus began by pointing out that this was the teaching of the saints, namely, that reality is multi-levelled, in *Amb.Io*. 41 he neither explicitly returned to this statement nor explained why the saints would need awareness of such intricacies. Perhaps this very obscurity prevented scholars from realizing the centrality of the experience of holiness for the Maximian construct. I must turn now to the aspect of unification.

The Five Syntheses

Whether it is about the weak tensions within the various layers of the universe or the ontological rift between the created and the uncreated, the five divisions constitute as many existential challenges faced by the human person —the centre from which and by which the whole is represented, and the ecosystemic agent divinely appointed to bridge the many strands of being. Whereas *Q.Thal*. 48, as we shall see, speaks only indirectly about the human unifying vocation through describing the exploits of the saints, *Amb.Io*. 41 allocates some space to it (PG 91. 1305A–C) by introducing the philosophical theme of the microcosm (Tollefsen 2008: 102–3; von Balthasar 2003: 173–6, 199–200), without the term being used. More precisely, in addressing the fifth polarity, the passage emphasizes gendered humankind as situated by God (p. 382) in the midst of everything, to naturally connect the components of all dichotomies. Humanity appears from the outset 'as a kind of workshop (ἐργαστήριον) within which all things are supremely held together (συνεκτικώτατον)'. The text continues as follows (PG 91. 1305B):

> Being provided with a unifying potential (τὴν πρὸς ἕνωσιν δύναμιν) due to the characteristic of its own parts of being related (σχετικῆς ἰδιότητος) to all the extremities, [the human being] naturally mediates (φυσικῶς μεσιτεύων) between all the extremities. In this fashion the mode of Creation of the divided things is completed in accordance with the [divine] cause, [humanity] being destined to manifest within itself the great mystery of the divine intention in an obvious way, namely, the reciprocal union (τήν πρός ἄλληλα … ἕνωσιν) of the extremities pertaining to beings into a harmonious manner. [This union] keeps advancing upwards from things closer to those far off and from those inferior to those superior, ending in God. For this purpose humankind had to be finally introduced among the [created] beings like a grace (χάριν) and like a natural bond of sorts (σύνδεσμός τις φυσικός) that mediates between the extremities of the universe by way of its own parts. [Indeed, the human being] brings to unity (εἰς ἕν) within itself the things that are naturally separated from one another by a great distance (πολλῷ … τῷ διαστήματι), so that all are gathered together into a union with God, their cause. Thus, firmly beginning with the first or its own division, [the human being] advances in stages and in order—through the intermediate ones—towards God, in whom it finds the limit of the supreme and unifying ascension through all things, and in whom there is no division.

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Our passage speaks of humankind's divine mandate and capacity for unification, an aspect entailed by the three designations, namely, as a 'natural bond of sorts', as having a 'unifying potential', and as endowed with a 'relational characteristic' (σχετικῆς ἰδιότητος); all three allude to the microcosm. The Confessor understood these three features as signifying humankind's consubstantiality with all the levels of Creation, consubstantiality which in the process of unification, we assume, becomes familiarity. Though differently worded, a similar understanding occurs in *Myst.* 7 (Boudignon 2011: 33. 540–35. 575), from where the term 'microcosm' is again missing (Thunberg 1985: 73–4). *Myst.* 7 depicts a symmetry between the dichotomous human being and the equally dichotomous universe (Boudignon 2011: 33. 540–34. 552), whose convergence is secured by a mystical bond rooted in the pervading divine principles (Boudignon 2011: 34. 552–65). The chapter implies the microcosm and its ramifications even further, in terms of the human being 'as a part by relation to the whole and a small measure in relation to the great one' (ὡς μέρος τῷ ὅλῳ καὶ μικρὸς τῷ μεγάλῳ), and the cosmos 'as a human being' (ὡς ἄνθρωπος) (Boudignon 2011: 34. 565–35. 569). Here, *Myst*. 7 echoes *Amb.Io.* 41 and its reference to the final outcome of the process of unification accomplished by Christ, namely, the metamorphosis of the cosmos into 'another human being' (ἄνθρωπον ἄλλον; PG 91. 1312A). In their microcosmic allusions, both *Myst.* 7 and *Amb.Io.* 41 seem to borrow from Gregory the Theologian's *Or.* 28. 22 and 38. 11 (Costache 2011: 31, 36–7; Thunberg 1995: 135). The Cappadocian influences upon the Maximian use of the microcosm are well documented (Blowers 2012a: 357–8, 359–60; Meyendorff 1983: 142).

(p. 383) Whilst Maximus used the concept of the microcosm to convey the natural capability of the human being as a comprehensive mediator, he suggested that the microcosm could not be a sufficient requirement for unification. For its unifying potential to be activated, the human being has to adopt a theocentric lifestyle (Nellas 1997: 54–6). The passage cited above actually presents the whole unifying journey as an ascent to God (εἰς θεόν and πρὸς Θεόν; PG 91. 1305B–C). The idea features similarly in *Amb.Io*. 7 (PG 91. 1092B–C), where the deified human being appears both as connected to the entire Creation and, by adopting a theocentric life, as facilitating God's encompassing of the universe. The concrete form of this lifestyle is the virtuous path, which leads from true knowledge and love to familiarity. *Amb.Io*. 41 refers repeatedly to virtue, which appears as the privileged way to make good use of all things, in accordance with their principles (Costache 2013: 274–5, 279–80). For instance, 'divine virtue' (θείαν ἀρετήν) is necessary to accomplish the first union (PG 91. 1305C–D). The text likewise includes the phrase 'in what concerns virtue' (κατ᾽ ἀρετήν), which refers to the angelic-like status reached by those who undertake the final stages of the unifying ascent (PG 91. 1305D). Moreover, virtue emerges implicitly in the second synthesis, through the phrase 'leading a holy life' or 'leading a life befitting the saints' (ἁγιοπρεποῦς ἀγωγῆς; PG 91. 1305D). Virtue introduces human beings, furthermore, to an angelic form of knowing (γνῶσις) that results in the overcoming of ignorance, the main sign of the divide between the Creation and God (PG 91. 1305A–D; 1308A–B). The topic of ignorance and knowledge echoes again the Cappadocian discourse (Bradshaw 2004: 199; Costache 2011: 35–6). Moreover, virtue and its highest form, that is, love (ἀγάπη), is the means by which the human being communes (ἑνώσας) with God in the fifth synthesis (PG 91. 1308B); this occurrence of love, which escaped von Balthasar (2003: 339), is analogous to the construal of love in *Ep*. 2 (PG 91. 400A). The emphasis on virtue, mystical knowledge, and love, all pertaining to a 'life befitting the saints', points to the experience of holiness as the underlying factor of the Maximian worldview. We shall see below that the same emphasis is present in *Q.Thal.* 48, which describes the achievements of the saints.

Amb.Io. 41 emerges therefore as complexly structured. Culture and ecclesial tradition went hand-in-hand for the Confessor, both in relation to the representation of reality and the understanding of the factors leading the universe to a deeper coherence. Indeed, in symmetry with the depiction of the five divisions by way of scriptural and philosophical concepts, the presuppositions of unification are described in both philosophical (the microcosm) and ecclesial (saintly life) images. The two aspects are not incompatible. In fact, we can surmise that Maximus believed God to have secured the unity of the universe by the mediatory function of the human microcosm, which in turn had to be activated through the virtuous lifestyle. I must turn now to the five syntheses.

According to God's intention, the unions had to unfold, in the inverse order of the five polarities, as follows (PG 91. 1305C–1308C): first, the human synthesis, achievable by virtuously overcoming the passionate approach to gender division; second, the union between the inhabited land and the paradise, to be effected by way of a saintly life; third, the union of earth and sky, achievable through an angelic type of virtue; fourth, the synthesis of the visible and invisible domains, by acquiring the knowledge **(p. 384)** of the angels; and fifth, the communion of the created and the uncreated, achieved through love (δι᾽ ἀγάπης). The passage addresses four of the five

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syntheses by using the same verb, ἑνόω ('to unify' or 'to unite'), which in *Q.Thal.* 48 is applied to all five stages. The major difference is that in *Q.Thal.* it appears as 'united' (ἥνωσεν), in the aorist indicative, and points to a fait accompli by Christ, whilst here the verb appears as 'uniting' (ἑνώσας), in the present participle, thus showing a task to be completed. Strangely, *Amb.Io.* 41 omits this verb altogether with reference to the first unification, both here and in the first depiction of the syntheses effected by Christ (PG 91. 1308D); this omission may suggest the crucial role played by the human synthesis within the entire unifying process.

In contrast to the Thalassian rendition, which, we shall see, stresses the oneness of Creation in an explicit manner solely in regards to the third and the fourth syntheses, our passage points out that all five syntheses achieve and reveal higher levels of unity. For instance, in speaking of the first union (PG 91. 1305C), the text maintains that in committing themselves to 'divine virtue' human beings overcome the gender division and the complications it entails, experiencing a unity that corresponds to 'the antecedent principle of human Creation' and so to God's intention. In reaching this state, a human being appears exclusively as human (ἄνθρωπον μόνον), thus illustrating a broader category that takes precedence over those of male and female. Whilst gender categories and human multiplicity are never abolished, they are overwhelmed by the principle of a new life, above gender (Costache 2013: 278–86). The fact that the differences remain in this new state emerges within the Confessor's return to the topic by using the plural, 'human beings only' (ἀνθρώπους μόνον; PG 91. 1312A). The solution of a state above gender, yet without eliminating the gender division, echoes the christological logic of unions and distinctions attributed to the Council of Chalcedon,[4] a complex logic that articulates both aspects as mutually inclusive yet on a higher plane of existence and organization. It is noteworthy that this logic goes back to the Platonic method of 'collection and division' in *Phaedrus* 265D–E (Fowler 1925a: 532–4) and *Philebus* 16C–17A (Fowler 1925b: 220) (Harrington 2007: 201–5), roots that become more obvious in the fourth part of *Amb.Io*. 41.

Given as a potentiality in nature and actualized through a holy life, this type of complex union defines the next three syntheses. Thus, the unifying process leads successively to 'one earth' (PG 91. 1305D), 'one and indivisible sensible Creation' (PG 91. 1305D–1308A), and 'one Creation' (PG 91. 1308A). The fifth union, 'of the created nature with the uncreated one' (PG 91. 1308B) is achievable only above nature, here through God's love for humankind and the love of humankind for God, resulting in the total 'oneness and sameness' of the Creation with God, yet by grace and not by nature (PG 91. 1308B–C) (Bradshaw 2004: 199–200; Lossky 2002: 87). In the expression, 'oneness and sameness', we recognize the two aspects of the process as unification and transformation, further developed in the description of Christ's ascent. What matters for now is (p. 385) that, as with the first unification, it seems that the five syntheses result in higher orders of unity and complexity: one humanity out of male and female; one earth out of paradise and inhabited land; one cosmos out of earth and the sky; one Creation out of the visible and the intelligible; and finally one (theandric) reality (ὑπόστασις) out of the created and the uncreated. These complexly unified orders remind one of Cyril of Alexandria's 'one Christ and Son out of both [natures]' (*Ep*. 4. 3, Wickham 1983: 6). Suggested by the repeated occurrence of ἑνόω within our passage, the christological reference is not inapt. Elsewhere, and seemingly echoing Plato's *Philebus* 16C (Fowler 1925b: 220), in *Q.Thal.* 60 (Laga–Steel 1990: 73. 27–75. 51), the Confessor affirmed that the whole of reality, created and uncreated, was designed from the outset to correspond to the mystery of the composite Christ, and that Christ emerged 'in the fullness of time' precisely to reveal the divine intention concerning a reality that was both coherent and complex. In pointing to the deification of the entire Creation through the union of humankind with God, *Amb.Io*. 41 reiterates the same idea (Larchet 1996: 107–9).

For Maximus, however, the project of unification was not accomplished by humankind, which failed to take the virtuous path that would have led to knowledge and communion with God. It was Christ who, through his Incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, achieved the five syntheses. Here *Amb.Io.* 41 meets the message put in a straightforward manner by *Q.Thal.* 48.

Christ and the Five Syntheses

Whereas the project of the five unifications appears as the original assignment of humankind, the latter's failure to fulfil the divine intention prompted the salvific intervention of God, who in Christ, the Logos incarnate, both restored humanity and achieved the syntheses (Blowers 2012a: 284–6); in *Amb.Io*. 41 Maximus did not leave room for the possibility of the Incarnation to have taken place irrespective of the Fall (Blowers 2012b: 205; Radosavljevic 1982: 202–4). In the Confessor's words, whilst humankind was so designed as to fulfil 'the great mystery of the divine intention, namely, the reciprocal union (τήν πρός ἄλληλα … ἕνωσιν) of the extremities pertaining to beings into a

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harmonious manner' (PG 91. 1305B), it was Christ who brought the intention of God the Father to its completion. Given the human failure, the Logos became incarnate 'to save the wasted humankind' first; only then it became possible for him to fulfil God's original intention, by recapitulating (ἀνακεφαλαιώσας) and bringing to union (ἕνωσις) all things that are in heaven and on earth (PG 91. 1308D). In fact, in saving fallen humankind, Christ restored its natural unifying capabilities (Bradshaw 2010: 820–1).

The relevant passage (PG 91. 1308C–1312B) begins by addressing the Fall as the reason behind the salvific intervention of Christ. In reiterating the classical theme of the Fall, Maximus reinterpreted it radically within the framework of his narrative of everything. Thus, the Confessor observed that this shift caused the failure of God's unification project, also highlighting the turning away of humanity from God as the content of the Fall—a theme in which we discern echoes of Athanasius' *C.Gent.* 23 (Thomson 1971: 64. (p. 386) 38–47) and the broader Alexandrine tradition. Human beings abandoned their theocentric and God-given (θεόθεν) course for a mindless (ἀνοήτως) and unnatural (παρὰ φύσιν) movement towards things created, and in taking this course—opposite to the saintly lifestyle required by the unifying project—they misused (παραχρησάμενος) their natural unifying potential and so deepened the chasms within an already polarized reality (Nellas 1997: 57–8). Their new lifestyle caused, therefore, not merely ethical disturbances. The Fall introduced a factor of disunity (διαίρεσις), an ontological imbalance that resulted in a shattered Creation, a universe that risked the relapse into nothingness (εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν). Maximus returned to similar consequences for the unity of humankind in *Q.Thal.* introduction (Laga–Steel 1980: 33. 265–72).

The severity of this degradation was such that it prompted the immovable God (τό ἀκίνητον) to execute a paradoxical unmoved movement (κινούμενον ἀκινήτως) towards fallen humanity and the wounded Creation (PG 91. 1308C–D). Indeed, the Fall disrupted the informational matrix of the universe—signified by the λόγοι or principles—and so only their source, the Logos incarnate, was able to reactivate the principles of beings according to the divine intention (Bradshaw 2004: 206), by directing the particular *logoi* towards the general ones. It is within this context (PG 91. 1308C) that the Confessor turned to the phrase from Gregory the Theologian's *Or.* 39. 13. 8–9 (Moreschini 1990: 176), 'the natures renew, and God becomes man', which serves as a pretext for the whole chapter (PG 91. 1304D), a fuller interpretation of which he offered at the end of *Amb.Io*. 41 (PG 91. 1313CD). For Maximus, the Gregorian phrase evoked the Logos' paradoxical motion towards the wandering Creation, a movement which culminated in the Incarnation and which found a proportionate echo in the renovation of human/created nature.

From this point on, Maximus undertook a contemplation of Christ's salvific journey by reinterpreting it along the lines of the narrative of everything; this is likewise the starting-point of *Q.Thal*. 48, as we shall see, which does not refer to the task appointed to humankind before the Fall. The new angle brought to light aspects of the salvation wrought by Christ that are usually ignored within the written tradition; these aspects will become obvious in what follows. Two sections of this passage each address different sides of the unifying process, an aspect disregarded by scholars: the first one offers a lengthy description of Christ who went through the five layers of polarized reality 'as a human being' (ὡς ἄνθρωπος) or on behalf of humankind, whilst the second one depicts the same process, reduced to just four stages, as a gradual transformation of the whole of Creation into 'something like another human being' (καθάπερ ἄνθρωπον ἄλλον). The two descriptions are complementary, and together they convey further clarity to the original task of humankind, the task of the saints. Indeed, the syntheses operated by Christ within the bosom of reality did not just fulfil the divine intention where humanity failed: they fully revealed the purpose of the unification project, namely, the radical transformation of reality. The fact that both sections refer to Christ's resurrection casts a paschal light upon the human destiny, and that of the Creation.

Ascending to God as a Human Being

The first rendering (PG 91. 1308D–1309D) displays the features of a journey account, intended maybe as an abridged version of the Gospel narratives, with the notable (p. 387) difference that the journey unfolds within the schema of the five-fold unification process and is ascribed a significance which is only possible within that specific framework.

The Logos entered the course of our existence through the Incarnation, 'becoming a perfect human being' (τέλειος ἄνθρωπος). By way of the paradoxical circumstances of his conception and birth, above the fallen nature, Christ 'forced out' (ἐξωθούμενος) the rule of gender categories, revealing that God's original intention for

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human existence did not concern biological reproduction. So Christ restored humankind's power to transcend biology—together with the complications, prejudices, and discriminations entailed in the division into female and male. Interestingly, in conveying this message, the Confessor mentioned a line from Gal. 3: 28, a phrase dear to Gregory of Nyssa (e.g. *Opif.* 16, PG 44. 181A), namely, that in Christ there is neither male nor female. This is how Christ accomplished the first synthesis, by entering this life in an extraordinary manner and by living above the constraints of gender.

After the liberation of humankind from the tyranny of gender categories, Christ bridged paradise and the inhabited land by sanctifying (ἁγίασας) the world through his dwelling in it as a human being; as a sanctification of the οἰκουμένη, humankind's abode, salvation amounts to a house blessing, which may be another clue to understanding the Maximian theory of the transformation of reality. The expression ἀνθρωποπρεποῦς ἀναστροφῆς corresponds to the ideal of a saintly life required by the unifying process, a connection supported by the reference to Christ who unified reality 'as a human being', namely, as a perfect, or perfected, human being. This accomplishment was further confirmed by his death, which did not constitute for him an obstacle when passing from here to paradise, and by his resurrection, since he encountered no difficulty in returning from paradise to his disciples. In short, the second stage amounts to keeping safe (διασώζουσα) the sanctified earth by preserving the principle (λόγον) of its unity free (ἐλεύθερον) from the division between paradise and the inhabited land—as much as human nature was freed from the oppression of gender. The account continues with Christ's ascension as a whole human being, of body and soul, by which he both revealed the unity of Creation and unified the dispersed parts of the universe. The passage ends by referring to the fifth synthesis in terms of Christ appearing (ἐμφανισθείς) on/in our behalf (ὑπέρ ἡμῶν) to God the Father, fulfilling as a human being God's intention. The end of the account seems to reiterate a theme from *Amb.Io*. 7 (PG 91. 1092B–C), where God embraces all things through the intermediary of the human being (Cooper 2005: 64–5); the two chapters, in which we recognize an Athanasian influence (see *Inc*. 41. 5–7; Kannengiesser 1973: 412. 18–414. 35), are in fact complementary.

Whilst being existentially richer, terminologically this account is less precise than those of the second part of *Amb.Io.* 41 and *Q.Thal*. 48, where the verb 'to unify' (ἑνόω) features consistently. The account under consideration begins with Christ's unifying action, rendered as a noun, speaking of 'the general unification (τῆς καθόλου … ἑνώσεως) of all things', yet it utilizes the verb ἥνωσε only twice, for the third and the fourth syntheses. In turn, our account refers to the first union in terms of the Incarnation and the liberation of humankind from the rule of gender; regarding the earth synthesis, the text employs ἁγίασας ('he is the one that sanctified') for the action of the Lord, an action which reached its end in the revelation of the earth as indivisibly one; and finally, for the fifth synthesis, (p. 388) it employs the scriptural image of Christ presenting himself as a human being to God the Father. This terminological variation may suggest that Maximus intended to present the unification theory, not in the technical jargon of Christology, but as a scriptural kind of account, the five unions featuring as details of a narrative based on the Gospels. Alongside the events of the Lord's life mentioned herein, this aspect emerges for example in the reference to Christ as acting in obedience (καθ᾽ ὑπακοήν) to the Father, to whom he was accountable, which reminds of a series of New Testament passages (see John 5: 30; John 17: 4; Rom. 5: 19), and, of course, the phrase has likewise a strong monastic resonance. The effect is unmistakeable: the text reads as a scriptural summary, a story, while conveying the message of Christ's journey through the five stages as a salvific activity.

Another explanation for this variation from the christological vocabulary related to the verb 'to unify' (ἑνόω) may be that *Amb.Io.* 41 is primarily interested in discussing the unifying task appointed to humankind, or rather to the saints, and not the salvation wrought by Christ. Although the chapter contains strong soteriological overtones, the latter do not represent its main goal. Thus the Lord's activity becomes here a function of the anthropologically conditioned schema of reality, similar to the very christological focus of *Q.Thal.* 48, which gives room for a lengthy discussion about the saints, as we shall see. The emphasis on Christ fulfilling the task in obedience to the Father 'as a human being' (Meyendorff 1983: 142; Larchet 1996: 112), or rather a holy person, confirms this interpretation. Indeed, the use of ἁγίασας to show one of the outcomes of Christ's life on earth echoes the saintly lifestyle that conditions the grand unification of reality: Christ genuinely lived a saintly life, when we failed to do so, sanctifying the earth on our behalf. The text is therefore about Christ illustrating the saintly life required by the unifying process, and not about human beings having to emulate Christ, as is sometimes believed (Blowers 2012a: 359; Thunberg 1995: 383). Since the Gospels do not directly refer to this aspect of salvation, we can surmise that the reference to the earth's sanctification is a Maximian projection that is based on his exposure to saintly people,

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together with their experiences and wisdom—as suggested by the beginning of *Amb.Io.* 41 (PG 91. 1304D). The two explanations are not mutually exclusive; the Confessor took both Christ's activity and the scriptures as signifying the experiences of the saints.

Unification and Metamorphosis

The second rendering (PG 91. 1309B–1312B) addresses only the first four unions, which it depicts as stages of a metamorphic process that ends in the humanization, or the anthropic transformation, of the universe; the fact that this account makes no reference to the fifth synthesis may suggest that it takes for granted the conclusion of the previous narrative (with Christ presenting himself to the Father as a human being), whilst highlighting another side of the unifying process. Symbolic in nature, this mystical account ostensibly reiterates the theme of the microcosm only to alter it through a daring generalization, in which the container, that is, the cosmos, is contained within its human summary, here the human nature of Christ, and anthropomorphically shaped in the process. Significantly, the unifying activity is herein rendered by the verbs ἑνώσας, περιλαβών, and ἀνεκεφαλαιώσατο, which depict it as ontologically occurring within Christ who embraces (p. 389) all things as an actual ἐργαστήριον, laboratory, or workshop. In Christ, the human microcosm becomes, therefore, the limited that encompasses the unlimited (*finitum capax infinitum*), the part that contains the whole. After pointing once more to our failure to fulfil the divine intention, Maximus revealed how Christ performed the first four syntheses:

> First of all, he united (ἑνώσας) us to ourselves within himself by removing the difference between male and female. Instead of men and women, in which the manner of the division is primarily observed, he showed us chiefly and truly as human beings only (ἀνθρώπους μόνον), fully shaped (μεμορφωμένους) like him and bearing his image properly and entirely unsullied, within which by no means is bound any of the known features of decay. Thus, together with us and for us, he is the one that embraced (περιλαβών) the extremities of the whole of Creation as his own parts, through those in the middle. [More precisely,] he indissolubly bound to one another around himself the paradise and the inhabited land, the sky and the earth, the sensible beings and the intelligible beings, given that he possessed a body, a sensory capacity, a soul and a mind, just as we do. In line with the given manner, through appropriating each extremity [of reality] by its corresponding part, he recapitulated (ἀνεκεφαλαιώσατο) all things within himself in a divine manner (θεοπρεπῶς). This way, he pointed out that the whole of Creation exists as one, like another human being …

The mystical distinctiveness of the passage exceeds all previous depictions of reality and of the unifying process. The unifying journey shows Christ descending as God towards the Creation and humanization, and then ascending as a human being or, rather, as God incarnate, through the whole of the Creation which, in turn, is transformed into 'another human being'. It looks as if Maximus set a Byzantine precedent to the Kabbalistic and Sufi concepts of *Adam Elyon* and *al-Insân al-Kâmil*. What matters is that the divine economy embraces the entire Creation and not only humankind. Our chapter provides therefore a cosmological complement to the anthropological and historical account of the economy of *Q.Thal.* 22 (Laga–Steel 1980: 137. 4–16). This cosmological schema differs from that in *Myst.* 7, in that, whereas *Myst.* 7 addresses the symmetrical dichotomies of the human being and the cosmos, *Amb.Io.* 41 displays a more intricate anthropology and a more comprehensive cosmology. Specifically, the four levels of reality discussed in our passage—that is, humankind, the earth, the universe and the Creation—correspond symbolically to an anthropological outline of body, sense, soul, and mind. Furthermore, *Amb.Io*. 41 has Christ as a protagonist, whom *Myst*. 7 ignores, and speaks of a radical transformation of the universe within the humanity of the Lord, whereas *Myst*. 7 proposes only a metaphorical symmetry. Indeed, Christ, the Logos incarnate, put on all the features of the human being who, as a natural link of all things, was called from the beginning to unify the utterly polarized reality. Christ has become then the microcosm, the connector, and the unifying workshop whose members both signify the various cosmic regions and are connected to the universe. Due to the infrastructural bonds between the four parts of the human being and the four levels of reality, Christ unifies and/or recapitulates within himself the whole of Creation, bringing it to a higher level of complexity—as 'another human being'.

(p. 390) Maximus believed in a fundamentally anthropic conditioning of the universe, revealed by the accomplishments of Christ 'as a human being'. It appears that, within the ascent of the Lord, the universe experiences a transformation similar to that of the first synthesis, where men and women become 'only humans'; they are not just perceived differently, but become what they represent, as signified by the perfect participle, 'fully

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shaped' (μεμορφωμένους). Although mentioning it only for the first and the fourth syntheses, seemingly the Confessor extended the idea of transformation to the entire unification process, as proven by its final outcome, the humaniform universe. This way, the Confessor followed to its logical end the theme of the Incarnation: Christ ascended 'as a human being' and in so doing he transformed everything that he united into 'another human being'.

With regard to the unification process, alongside the mystical perspective of the human microcosm that lends its shape to the universe, Maximus referred to two other factors. The first factor is signified by the adverb 'in a divine manner' (θεοπρεπῶς), which is a conceptual climax to the line begun by the statement concerning the saintly life required for the unifying process, and continued in the reference to the sanctifying activity of Christ. More than revealing Christ's divine identity, the adverb rendered above as 'in a divine manner' points to the fact that the whole process required the agent(s) to be either divine or deified. Subtly, the Confessor strengthened here the earlier point that no natural factor is sufficient for the grand unification and, in so doing, he confirmed the experience of holiness as the metanarrative of the whole construct. The second factor, introduced at the end of the passage, shows, like in *Q.Thal.* 48 and earlier in *Amb.Io.* 41, that this unity is possible, internally, 'given the one, simple, and unqualified … principle' of the Creation (PG 91. 1312B). This second factor leads into the last part of *Amb.Io.* 41, which deals with various other natural and epistemological aspects.

Christ's accomplishment of the unifying project, as a journey through the layers of reality and as a transformation of the Creation, reveals both the cosmic proportions of the salvific activity of the Lord and the original intention of God regarding the universe, which eschatologically—we assume—will become what the Maximian theory asserts. Whereas the second part of *Amb.Io.* 41 shows the human being as called to mediate between the opposite ends of the five dichotomies, the third part presents Christ both as performing 'like a human being' what was from the outset our task, and as revealing the ultimate implications of the unifying process, namely, the sanctification of humankind's cosmic house and the (the)anthropic transformation of the cosmos; the latter nuance is mainly supported by *Q.Thal.* 60, as has been discussed. The three relevant parts of *Amb.Io.* 41 provide us with a description, from the outside in, of humankind's wide milieu, which pertains to the five dichotomies, and a triple description, from the inside out, of human efforts to transform the milieu by (divine-)humanizing or sanctifying it. Through the concentric circles of the five polarities, embedded within the design of the cosmic house, we discern a metaphorical anthropocentrism, as signified by οἰκουμένη; likewise, we discern a mystical anthropomorphism in the triple depiction of the ecosystemic activity (a human οἰκονομία, without the term being used) pertaining to the five syntheses. I must turn now to the other classical locus of the theory.

(p. 391) A Summary of the Theory (*Q.Thal.* 48)

Whilst not directly concerned with the Maximian worldview, *Q.Thal*. 48 (Laga–Steel 1980: 331–49) includes a few passages relevant here. With regard to queries about various anagogical types from 2 Chron. 26 (LXX), the most relevant passage in *Q.Thal.* 48 (Laga–Steel 1980: 333. 65–335. 81) ponders the ecosystemic fullness of Christ's mediating activity, which, in light of the five occurrences of the verb ἥνωσεν ('he united'), appears as a generalization of the hypostatic union. This lexical connection between Christ's mediating ministry and the mystery of the Incarnation has no explicit confirmation within the passage under consideration. Nevertheless, the association of the two aspects could be inferred from an earlier passage (Laga–Steel 1980: 333. 40–9) where Maximus discussed the mystical meaning of the towers, the door, the corners and the cornerstone. He perceived in those items symbols of the church, the 'corner' that brought to a connection (πρὸς … συνάφειαν) the two walls, representing the Jews and the Gentiles, and Christ, the link (σύνδεσμος) whose Incarnation (σάρκωσις) (see also Laga–Steel 1980: 339. 165–341. 172) is the cornerstone of the church itself. Here is the text:

> [Jesus Christ] has become the cornerstone of the angle, that is of the church. For the way the corner (γωνία) as such brings two walls to an interlock (συνάφειαν), that way the church of God, having Christ as a connection (σύνδεσμον), becomes the union (ἕνωσις) of two nations, of those from among the Gentiles and those from among the Jews … For he that says, 'I am the door' is the gate and the door of the church, and the gate has towers, that is the fortifications of the divine dogmas concerning the Incarnation (σαρκώσεως).

We find here two keywords from *Amb.Io.* 41, 'connection' (σύνδεσμος) and 'union' (ἕνωσις), which show a clear link with the theory of everything. Furthermore, whilst referring to the activity of the church, this passage signals

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explicitly the importance of the christological event of the Incarnation for the unifying programme. As in *Q.Thal.* 63 (Laga–Steel 1990: 177. 485–92), Maximus could not construe the activity of the church in separation from Christ; in uniting the nations, the church continues Christ's very own work, thus expanding his Incarnation. This ecclesial generalization of the paradigm complements the statement that 'the Logos of God and God ever wishes to operate within all the mystery of his embodiment' (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1084C–D). The Confessor addressed more broadly the unifying activity of the church, as a recapitulation of the faithful under Christ, in *Myst.* 1 (Boudignon 2011: 12. 164–14. 198; Riou 1973: 135–46, 148–59).

In the passage of interest (Laga and Steel 1980: 333. 65–335. 81), Christ joined together divided Creation by way of 'various unifications' or 'corners'. The text reads:

> 'And upon the corners he built towers.' It may be that the word [of Scripture] called corners the various unions accomplished through Christ between the divided created beings. For he united (ἥνωσε) humankind in the spirit (τῷ πνεύματι), by mystically taking away [from it] the difference between male and female through **(p. 392)** liberating the principle of being from the passionate features set down upon both [genders]. He also united (ἥνωσεν) the earth by tearing away the utter difference between the sensible paradise and the inhabited land. Then he united (ἥνωσεν) the earth and the sky, thus proving that the self-contained nature of the sensible beings is one. Furthermore he united (ἥνωσεν) the sensible and the intelligible beings, showing the nature of things created to be one, linked by way of a mystical principle. Finally he united (ἥνωσεν) the created nature to the uncreated one, by way of a principle and mode that are above nature. Upon each union (ἑνώσεως) or corner (γωνίας) he built cohesive and connective towers, namely, making them secure by the divine dogmas.

The passage appears to be a summary of the third part within *Amb.Io.* 41, paying attention to neither the five divisions nor the original task of humankind. The five syntheses depict the whole of reality from particular to general, by way of increasingly wider spheres, that take humanity as a starting-point, to end with the union of the Creation and the uncreated. Since the first unification refers to fallen humankind, this depiction addresses a wounded Creation in need of salvation. As in *Amb.Io*. 41, Christ restored the spheres from within, through their λόγοι (Laga–Steel 1980: 333. 70, 335. 76–7), here represented as 'corners' that unite the divided layers of reality. More precisely, he activated within humankind the 'principle of nature' (τὸν λόγον τῆς φύσεως), then a 'certain mystical principle' (τινα λόγον μυστικόν) that secured the unification of the universe, and then the 'supernatural principle and mode' (τὸν ὑπὲρ φύσιν λόγον τε καὶ τρόπον) that united the created and the uncreated. We recognize in the latter both the phraseology of *Amb.Io*. 41 and the christological synthesis, the hypostatic union, briefly addressed by the previously analysed passage and fully disclosed as a reason and purpose of the cosmic existence in *Q.Thal.* 60 (Laga–Steel 1990: 73. 5–77. 62). Given these correspondences, and alongside the crescendo of Christ's ecosystemic activity, the five-fold occurrence of ἥνωσεν suggests this activity as unfolding within the paradigm of the hypostatic union or Christ's very mode of existence. We retain the strong christological emphasis within the construct of the five syntheses, endorsed a little later (Laga–Steel 1980: 337. 130–2), which points more clearly to the understanding of the theory as a generalization of the hypostatic union, than *Amb.Io*. 41. Interestingly, the syntheses were effected 'in the spirit' (τῷ πνεύματι), a phrase which may suggest both a trinitarian dimension, referring therefore to the Holy Spirit, and a *modus operandi*, thus meaning 'spiritually'. Although the first possibility cannot be excluded, it is more probable that Maximus used the phrase to mean 'spiritually', intending to highlight the mystical aspect of the unions, which even as remaining obscure to the eyes of many is disclosed to the saints (Bradshaw 2010: 819–20). Related, in referring to the 'cohesive and connective' function of the 'divine dogmas' of Christ, the above passage apparently makes another allusion to the experience of holiness, a line continued in the next paragraphs.

Without returning to the five stages, the immediately following paragraphs (Laga–Steel 1980: 335. 82–97) show Christ as providing the saints with the necessary tools to contribute to the great unification. The chief unifying factors are the 'contemplation of nature' (φυσικὴ θεωρία) and the commandments of the 'ethical teaching' (ἠθική **(p. 393)** διδασκαλία) (Laga–Steel 1980: 335. 86, 96–7) or, later, 'praxis and contemplation' (πρᾶξιν καὶ θεωρίαν; Laga–Steel 1980: 339. 144; Harrington 2007: 195–6). The texts in question reiterate the theme of the dogmas about reality (Laga–Steel 1980: 335. 85–7) that had been referred to in the conclusion of the anterior passage (Laga–Steel 1980: 335. 78–81), further associating the practical and contemplative achievements of the saints with the activity of Christ. The dogmas or the perceptions of the saints coincide with those of Christ, the way the activity of the church coincides with that of its head.

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Another relevant passage is found in the second half of *Q.Thal.* 48 (Laga–Steel 1980: 341. 178–93), which contains a new reference to 'the many corners' and 'the towers built upon them'. The text reads as follows:

> 'And upon the corners.' [The phrase] affirms that many are the corners upon which the God-strengthened mind built the towers. A corner is not only the union (ἕνωσις) of the parts to the wholes, [which is possible] within the same nature (επὶ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως) or by way of the same principle of being (κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦ εἶναι λόγον); … it [also] carries individual beings to the species to which they belong, the species to the families and the families to the essence; and so, in unique ways, [each of] the extremities are connected together through their edges. Within these parts the principles (λόγοι) become wholly manifested as though they were corners through which are accomplished the many and various unions (ἑνώσεις) of the divided things. Likewise, [corners are the unions] of the mind and the sensorial faculty, of the sky and the earth, of the sensible beings and the intelligible ones, and of nature with [its] principle. Upon all these, by way of its own knowledge the contemplative mind raises up the right opinions about each, thus wisely building spiritual towers upon the corners, that is [building] the connecting opinions about [or representations of] the unions upon the [actual] unions.

The text refers to an aspect pertaining to the experience of holiness, namely, the way 'the God-strengthened mind' (ὁ κατὰ θεὸν ἰσχυρότατος νοῦς) or 'the contemplative mind' (ὁ θεωρητικὸς νοῦς; Laga–Steel 1980: 341. 179–80, 191) represents reality. As with the previous passage, neither does this one rigorously return to the five unifications, of which it mentions only two, the third and the fourth; in exchange it adds more examples (Laga–Steel 1980: 341. 181, 188, 189), such as the union of the mind to the sensorial faculty (νοῦ πρὸς αἴσθησιν), that of nature to its principle (φύσεως πρὸς λόγον) and that of the parts to the wholes (ἡ τῶν μερικῶν πρὸς τὰ καθ᾽ ὅλου). The passage allocates more space to the latter (Laga–Steel 1980: 341. 180–7), Maximus describing this synthesis in terms of an ascending union made possible within a given species by its 'principle of existence' (τοῦ εἶναι λόγον; Laga–Steel 1980: 341. 182). Due to this common denominator of all created beings, that is, the principle, individual beings are united to the species to which they belong, the species to the families and the families to the essence (Laga–Steel 1980: 341. 182–4; Harrington 2007: 198–9). From this viewpoint, the passage presents many affinities with the fourth part of *Amb.Io*. 41 (PG 91. 1312B–1313B). This contemplative elucidation of the conceptual 'towers' and 'corners', that is, the links between the 'extremities' (Laga–Steel 1980: 341. 184) represented by the various orders of being, appears as a significant contribution to the understanding of the mode of union. This matter has not (p. 394) escaped the scholiast who has interpreted the five steps in the light of the last passage treated here, showing how the unions are secured by the principles that pervade the whole of the Creation (see the fifth and sixth scholia; Laga–Steel 1980: 345. 24–347. 31).

Of further interest is the end of the passage, which refers to the mind that 'builds spiritual towers upon the corners' or, rather, links the representations—'the connecting opinions about the unions'—with the unions themselves. At a first glance tautological, the sentence in question points to a tension between representation and reality. This is a very specific Maximian topic, if we think of the Confessor's usual concern to rectify the misrepresentations of reality that lead humankind to a misuse of things; a classical illustration of this concern undoubtedly remains the introduction to *Q.Thal.* (Laga–Steel 1980: 29. 209–41. 404). Thus, in contrast with minds bothered by worldly matters which misrepresent reality, the 'contemplative mind' is called to achieve representations of reality that coincide with the nature of things. We surmise from the text that, to the eyes of the saints, the 'corners' embedded in the very matrix of reality are no longer hidden and misinterpreted; the perceptions of holy people about reality coincide with reality. This conclusion finds confirmation a few lines below (Laga–Steel 1980: 335. 84–5), in a sentence that speaks of the worldview of the saints as constituted upon 'the pious opinions about beings'. Together, these statements cast clarifying light upon the earlier reference to Christ as securing the unions by way of 'divine dogmas'. *Q.Thal.* 48 appears therefore as an internally consistent whole within which all the parts refer to one another, even without Maximus explicitly making such connections.

Holiness and Worldview in *Q.Thal.* 48 and *Amb.Io.* 41

While providing only scarce details of the Maximian theory of everything, *Q.Thal.* 48 displays important elements for the understanding of the unification process. Indeed, together with showing that what makes the syntheses possible are the divine principles which pervade the whole of the Creation, the chapter discusses three unifying agents, namely, Christ, the saints, and the church, and their respective—and connected—activities. Roughly the

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same aspects feature in *Amb.Io.* 41 where, however, nothing is said of the unifying ministry of the church. The emphasis of *Q.Thal.* 48 on the experience of holiness and its significance for the unification of reality, combined with the references to this experience in *Amb.Io*. 41 (sanctification, virtue, contemplation, and love), illuminates the prologue of the latter, with its five divisions and unions known to the saints. Both directly 'initiated in the knowledge of beings' and instructed within the succession of tradition (PG 91. 1304D), the saints are not just the silent source of the Maximian theory; they are those who have to face the five-fold challenge, being called by God to catalyse Creation's journey towards further unity and complexity. Therefore, the two chapters, *Q.Thal.* 48 and *Amb.Io.* 41, propose more than a theory of everything; (p. 395) they outline a theory of the saintly life. As a result, the significance of the Maximian multi-level worldview and its challenging implications, such as the anthropic conditioning of the divine unifying project and the anthropomorphic future of Creation, cannot be discussed outside the frame of reference of the experience of holiness.

Suggested Reading

The designation of Maximus' teaching in *Amb.Io.* 41 and *Q.Thal.* 48 as a 'theory of everything' is my own (Costache 2000 and 2006). The notion of a theory of everything is common in contemporary cosmology, and refers to the search for an algorithmic formula able to account for the universe. For the standard interpretation of the theory of everything, see Thunberg 1995: 373–427 and Thunberg 1985: 80–91.

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Notes:

([1]) Larchet 1996: 107–12; Lossky 2002: 108–10; Louth 1996: 69–71; Thunberg 1995: 373–427; Thunberg 1985: 80–91; Tollefsen 2008: 82–3, 101–2; von Balthasar 2003: 271–5.

([2]) The inclusion here of the intelligible within the realm of creation is somehow against the overall Maximian teaching that the principles (λόγοι) are uncreated divine thoughts.

([3]) *Amb.Io.* 41: PG 91. 1305C–D, 1308A, D, 1309B, 1312BC, and 1313A; *Q.Thal.* 48: Laga–Steel 1980: 333. 70, 335. 76, and 341. 178–93.

([4]) Bucur 2008: 200–1, 203–5; Cooper 2005: 9–13; Louth 1996: 22–3, 49–51; Riou 1973: 146–9.

Doru Costache

Doru Costache is senior lecturer in patristics at St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College (Sydney College of Divinity, Australia).

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Christian Life and Praxis: The Centuries on Love

George Berthold

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Abstract and Keywords

As a well-known monk, Maximus was heir to the long tradition of monastic teaching and practice as described by the great monastic teachers and theorists, as well as the best theological writers of the Greek church. Their influence on his own writings is clearly discernible. It is evident that he read them respectfully, but not necessarily uncritically. As Maximus himself tells the recipient of the *Centuries on Love*, these represent not the work of his own thought, but selections from the Fathers, summarized for ease of memorizing. The emphasis that he places on love, the biblical *agape*, is significant, not only in the title but in the content of the chapters. He is, in fact, presenting traditional monastic wisdom, but with a sharper focus on God and the Son he sent to redeem, out of love, a humanity fallen into ignorance and mutual hatred.

Keywords: love, monasticism, wisdom, hatred, ignorance, Centuries on Love

MAXIMUS is not significant because he represents a bold departure from traditional theology, but rather the opposite. He represents, in fact, an acceptance of the full force of the orthodox Christian teaching which is clear and coherent, and which requires balance in its theological, cultic, and ascetical expression. In a characteristic example of his approach, Maximus recalls (in a letter addressed to a monastic superior) that God's 'wonderful coming among us in the flesh is the principle and sole ground of our salvation' (*Ep.* 11, PG 91. 456C).

The genius of Maximus lies not only in the considerable intellectual force he expended in analysing the data of faith, especially in Christology, but also in his ability to compose a breathtaking synthesis of the wide dimensions of theology and the intellectual heritage to which his generation was heir. He was thoroughly familiar with the thought of the great Christian thinkers who had preceded him: Origen, Athanasius, Evagrius, Macarius, the Cappadocians, Nemesius, Ps-Dionysius, and Diadochus. He had absorbed their writings, and profited from the association with Sophronius and other holy monks, and appreciated their contribution in elucidating the mysteries of faith and of Christian living. On occasion, and with the finest subtlety, he gently nudges their language or their meaning from the thicket of ambiguity into more orthodox territory, lest their statements be misconstrued. In some cases, as with Evagrius or Ps-Dionysius, this required no little imagination on his part.

The success he achieved in explicating these authorities did not stop at the frontier of Greek thought and culture. His long residence in the West, especially in Carthage and Rome, provided the occasion for Maximus to familiarize himself with the thought of authorities of the church in the West, especially the great figure of Augustine. Even though no mention of Augustine is found in the writings of Maximus, it is highly likely that the eastern doctor had at least been briefed on the theology of the bishop of Hippo and, indeed, he had occasion to defend it to his eastern compatriots (see Börjesson 2015).

(p. 398) Especially since the publication of Viller's work (1930), the influence of Evagrius on the spiritual doctrine of Maximus has been debated, with differing conclusions. It is evident through Viller's comparison of texts that

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Maximus was familiar with the teaching of Evagrius, particularly in the realm of the ascetical struggle and the pursuit of contemplation. While appreciating its value, he restated it in an incarnationist context, while separating it from the Origenist context in which it had come down to him and had earned Evagrius the condemnation of the Fifth Ecumenical Council.

As a well-known and influential monk, it would be natural for Maximus to be asked to compile a collection of chapters or aphorisms suitable for memorization by the monks in their spiritual quest. He was heir to a long tradition of monastic teaching and practice, passed on from the great monastic teachers and theorists, as well as the best theological writers of the Greek church. Their influence on his writings is clearly discernible. It is evident that he read them respectfully, but not necessarily uncritically. Before passing their precious heritage along to subsequent generations, he added his own creative mark, sometimes to enhance, sometimes to modify, sometimes to correct one by the other. The *Centuries on Love* that he produced have been widely read, though they are not his deepest or most personal work. Rather, as he explains in the prologue, he merely made a selection of thoughts of the holy Fathers and passed them along for the profit of others. He collects four lists of 100 according to the number of the Gospels, a touch not without significance. In launching the form of the *Centuries*, Evagrius had collected six for the number of workdays in the week.

At his first trial in Constantinople in 654, Maximus was asked how he had persuaded Pyrrhus to condemn his own dogma and embrace that of his opponent. Maximus replied, 'I don't have a teaching of my own, but the common one of the catholic church' (Neil–Allen 2003: 157; also Berthold 1985: 22). Indeed, in his long defence of the dyothelite position, his reasoning is a defence of the traditional statements of the universal church, especially Chalcedon. The dyothelite position represented at the Lateran Council in 649 came about at a perilous time, in necessary fidelity to all previous councils, as the authentic expression of biblical teaching.

In a similar way, Maximus treats the ethical demands of Christian living as a working out of the Pauline claim, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal. 2: 20). In Paul's explanation, this new life has to reflect a change in spirit from that of the first Adam to the Holy Spirit of the second. The contrast represents a radical change in direction of human energies, of 'movement' (κίνησις) in personal striving for fulfilment.

In breaking from the Origenist idea of a primordial Fall, too beholden to the Platonist idea, Maximus bases himself on the biblical narrative of Genesis as explicated by Paul in Romans 5 and 6. He refers to Adam's transgression as 'ancestral sin' (*LA*, Van Deun 2000a: 7 and 119). Adam was created with a natural desire for God but turned away from this to pursue the pleasure provided by sensible realities (*Q.Thal.* 61): **(p. 399)**

> Man came into being adorned with the God-given beauty of incorruptibility and immortality, but having preferred (προτιμήσας) the shame of the material nature around him over spiritual beauty, and in addition wholly forgotten the eminent dignity of his soul—or rather the God who beautified the soul with divine form—he plucked a 'fruit' which, according to the divine decree that wisely administers our salvation, was worthy of the deliberative will (γνώμη), thus reaping not only bodily corruption and death, and the liability and propensity to every passion, but also the instability and inequality of external and material being, and the capacity and proneness for undergoing change.
>
> (*Amb.Io.* 8, PG 91. 1104B; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 76)

Romans 8 is cited soon afterwards. In *Amb.* 42 Maximus approvingly explains Gregory Nazianzen's notion of the Word's incarnate condescension (PG 91. 1320D) as a liberation from humans having to procreate like plants and animals and as a return of our nature to the ancient grace of incorruptibility (PG 91. 1321A). Out of love for humanity (φιλανθρωπία), he broke the cycle of pleasure and pain by willingly accepting the pain of abandonment, suffering, and death (cf. *Q.Thal.* 61).

Setting the human predicament on this christological grid, Maximus can view human life as a progressive liberation from destructive forces and a journey to a union with God in love, made available by the Incarnation of the Son of God.

In rejecting the Origenist myth of a primordial Fall from a state of original rest, Maximus, inspired by Gregory of Nyssa, can appreciate the mystery of Creation, of creatureliness, as a tension between birth (γένεσις) and rest (στάσις) seen in a very positive light. In creating us, God wisely gave humans a natural desire (πόθος) and love

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(ἔρως). The mystery of our coming into being is a call to the dynamic process of realizing our orientation to deification, which we received from God's creative will.[1] The distinction between *logos* and *tropos* will prove invaluable to Maximus in his discussion of the ascetical struggle and deification because it is the *tropos* of virtuous living in grace that will liberate the inner dynamism of the *logos* of nature in order to attain the blessedness of deification.

The purpose of asceticism is the liberation of human energies from the restraining forces of vice with a view to restoring to us our true and integral nature as it came to us from the Creator (Disdier 1930: 303, 307–13). Liberation from these restraining forces will unfetter the natural drive to pursue a loving union with God. Adam's sin was to redirect his desire to himself and his pleasure, away from the fulfilment for which God had created him. This love of self (φιλαυτία) short-circuited his energies and caught him up in a net of opposition between pleasure and pain. This ancestral sin is the heritage that he passed down to his descendants through human reproduction. Self-love is 'the passion for the body', a turning inward of human energy meant to be ecstatic.[2] For this reason self-love can be called the mother of all the (p. 400) vices, since it is the perversion of desire, and it is opposed by genuine love, charity (ἀγάπη), joined with self-mastery. No one ever hates his own flesh, as Maximus quotes Paul, but mortifies it and makes it his slave (Eph. 5: 29 and 1 Cor. 9: 27, quoted in *Car.* 3. 9).

The monks for whom Maximus was writing were living a life of contemplation, in search of wisdom and spiritual perfection. For the search to be authentic, it had to include a regimen of actions that conformed to and reflected the wisdom acquired and sought further. In other words, wisdom has to have an ethical side, and praxis has to be grounded in contemplation. Their relationship Maximus sees as mutually necessary and enriching. Praxis should always be joined to contemplation or prayer (Sherwood 1955b: 87).

> The active way does not suffice by itself for the perfect liberation of the mind from the passions to allow it to pray undistracted unless various spiritual contemplations also relieve it. The former frees the mind only from incontinence and hatred while the latter rids it also of forgetfulness and ignorance, and in this way it will be able to pray as it ought.
>
> (*Car*. 2. 5, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 90; Berthold 1985: 47)

Maximus makes clear that praxis refers not only, or even mainly, to specifically monastic traditions such as fasting, vigils, psalmody, etc., but also to the practice of virtues and the struggle to acquire them. Seeking God through contemplation alone will be fruitless: contemplation, *theoria*, must be accompanied by praxis, by which Maximus means observance of the commandments. In an interesting explanation of the success of Uzziah the young king, Maximus says that this was caused by his fear of God, which means his observance of the commandments.[3]

From long tradition spiritual masters habitually spoke of the two psychological appetites that characterize humans, the irascible and the concupiscible. Maximus sees both of these drives as given positive direction by the mind's intention: 'He is a powerful man who couples knowledge with action; for by the latter he extinguishes lust and subdues anger, and by the former he gives wings to the mind and flies off to God' (*Car*. 2. 28, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 104; Berthold 1985: 50).

When the concupiscible element of the soul is frequently aroused and has laid up in it a fixed habit of pleasure, it can be healed by a continual exercise of fasting, vigils, and prayer. And when the temper is repeatedly stirred up it makes the mind craven and cowardly. This condition can be healed by kindness, benevolence, love, and mercy (*Car*. 2. 70). In a chapter that he takes from Evagrius, Maximus urges us to curb the soul's irascible element with love and weaken its concupiscible element with self-mastery (ἐγκράτεια) (*Car*. 4. 80). The source is Evagrius (*Prak.* 35, Guillaumont 1971: 580). Also, we are advised to give flight to the soul's rational element with prayer (*Car.* 4. 80, Berthold 1985: 84). Like a physician prescribing medicine for someone who (p. 401) is ailing, Maximus is concrete and detailed in both his diagnosis and treatment of spiritual illnesses.

Passions

Like all created realities, the natures of the appetites are good in themselves, but because of deception and ill will, their natural direction can be imbalanced and their purpose thwarted. Maximus defines passion in *Car*. 2. 16 as 'a movement (κίνησις) of the soul contrary to nature either towards irrational love or senseless hate of something or

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on account of something material' (*Car*. 2. 16). (Actually, he is speaking of a blameworthy passion, which he had earlier defined in *Car*. 1. 35). Evil has no positive existence, Maximus asserts, following traditional doctrine. Our battle is not against persons or things and their representations, but against the passions joined to these representations (*Car*. 3. 40). Thus vice is the mistaken use (χρῆσις) of ideas from which follows the abuse (παράχρησις) of things (*Car*. 2. 17). In this definition we see the necessary alignment of nature and use, or reason and behaviour. 'For it is on the basis of whether we make use of things rationally or irrationally that we become either virtuous or wicked' (*Car*. 1. 92, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 84). What is needed to resist the onslaught of the passions is to strive for the state of *apatheia*, a condition of stillness and peace, where competing forces are balanced and the mind is set at peace.

In his long discussion of the vices to be resisted, Maximus refers explicitly to Paul's admonitions in Colossians 3: 5 and Romans 8: 6–13, contrasting the wisdom of the flesh with that of the Spirit (*Car*. 1. 83).

The Will

The control of the passions is based on a proper knowledge and appreciation of the *logos* of human appetites of the concupiscible and irascible types, as well as the power of memory and imagination in our decision-making. This is to say that an informed understanding of human psychology is necessary to appreciate the force of the sub-conscious. Knowing our motivations will help us to choose the actions which will be conducive to our greater happiness. In the end, though, the final decision over our actions belongs to the human will. We are pulled by many forces, both conscious and unconscious, worldly and unworldly.

As powerful as are the drives of the concupiscible and irascible elements in the human make-up, in the end it is through the will that a person directs their own course in life. Maximus is very clear in the *Centuries* that the will is the faculty by which humans determine which path they will follow in the choices facing them. Sherwood thinks the *Centuries* were composed by 626 (Sherwood 1952: 26), thus before the outbreak of the (p. 402) monothelite challenge. The emphasis Maximus places on the voluntary aspect of asceticism and progress in virtue is an indication of his appreciation of the hegemonic place held by the will in the human make-up. Thus he could see from early on the destructive effect the denial of a functioning human will in Christ would have on a theology of Incarnation.

In the very first chapter of the *Centuries*, Maximus defines love (ἀγάπη) as 'a good disposition of the soul by which one prefers no being to the knowledge of God.' The term 'prefers' (προτιμᾶ) is the very word Maximus uses to express the action of Adam in committing the ancestral sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden that brought on the interplay of pleasure and pain that Maximus talks about in *Q.Thal.* 61.

Human motivation is often complex, but God looks at the intention or purpose (σκόπον) for which the person acts. Someone who is a financial administrator and acquires money to relieve the needs of others is clearly not guilty of greed (*Car*. 3. 19). Conversely, even when performing religious acts, one may be motivated by unworthy motives, for instance seeking virtues or knowledge out of vainglory (*Car*. 2. 35, 3. 75, 3. 77). 'God searches the intention of everything that we do, whether we do it for him or for any other motive' (*Car.* 2. 36, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 110). The outbreak of the monothelite crisis will focus on the importance of the Saviour's having and using an integral human will, as demanded by the logic of the Council of Chalcedon. In his fidelity to the authentic psychological make-up of a genuine human nature, Maximus was already clear on the necessity of the voluntary character of the human agent.

God respects the freedom of the rational creature that he himself endowed with free will. Because of the evil influence of ancestral sin, human beings find that it is a struggle to conform to the noble nature and calling that is theirs by virtue of their Creation by a loving God. Their volitive power is wounded; they sense that their mind (νοῦς) is poised 'in the middle of two things, each one active in its own work, the one at virtue, the other at vice, in other words between angel and devil. The mind has the power and strength to follow or oppose the one it chooses' (*Car*. 3. 92, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 188). This notion seems inspired by Gregory of Nyssa (*In Cant.* 12, Langerbeck 1986: 345–6). In pursuing knowledge, we must keep our representations of things without passion. But we are always subject to the impulses of the flesh, Maximus insists (*Car*. 3. 95). While Christ's human will was supremely deified by its union with the divine will, ours deviates and fluctuates, characterized not by fixity but by flexibility (*Opusc.* 20, PG 91. 236D). Maximus makes clear that, notwithstanding this, Christ's will is of the same nature as

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ours, though ours is gnomic. In spite of the weaknesses of a wounded nature and bad habits, as well as the malevolence of evil spirits, we are assisted in our fight by angels, natural tendencies, and good will (*Car.* 3. 93). Even at this early stage of his writing, Maximus can emphasize the key role of the human will: 'For the mystery of salvation belongs to those who desire it, not to those who are forced to submit to it' (*Or.dom.,* Van Deun 1991: 35–6; Berthold 1985: 104 [n. 30] and 121). And: 'So finally then our salvation is in our will's grasp' (*LA* 42, Van Deun 2000a: 115. 981; Sherwood 1955a: 133). This is a theme that recurs frequently in Maximus. Naturally, Maximus presumes the action of divine grace.

(p. 403) God's respect for the freedom with which he has gifted humankind continues even when he voluntarily directs himself to the passions of the flesh by ignoring the principles of nature. 'In the movement of this principle he should know what is the law of nature and what is that of the passions, whose tyranny comes about by a choice of free will (γνωμικῶς) and not by nature (φυσικῶς)' (*Or.dom.,* Van Deun 1991: 69).

Love

The central place held by the will in human nature ensures that its role in redemption and deification will also be central, and this will be the great achievement of Maximus in his arguing for the full consequences of Chalcedon to be brought out and defended. The Saviour's human will is the same in nature as ours, even though it functions on a divine level (θεικῶς) (*Opusc.* 20, PG 91. 237A). It is because of the intimate but unconfused union of the human and divine wills in Christ that there can be the highest union between God and humanity, a union that is the very definition of love. It is this union that inspires the ascetical teaching of the *Centuries on Charity*.

Creation is itself an act of divine love; God creates at will out of infinite goodness (*Car.* 4. 3). Maximus discourages unbridled speculation on the creative act itself as the error of the pagan Greeks, not without a hint that some of their curiosity may have passed on to some Christian authors. God is unknowable but knowable in ideas about God (*Car.* 4. 7). Creatures participate in God in being and well-being (*Car.* 4. 11). God made the world out of love, and it is through love that all created realities will be returned to God to abide forever (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1072A).

In the *Centuries*, Maximus discusses love as the virtue around which the other virtues are positioned. As Dalmais observes (1948: 295), charity is the return to unity of human nature broken by sin, and consequently its reconciliation with God from whom it became separated by Adam's disobedience. As Christ unites divine and human natures in a single person, he procures deification for a reconciled humanity through a communion of the human will with God's.

The *Centuries* bring out the power of love as an organizing principle of all the virtues. Conversely, 'all the virtues assist the mind in the pursuit of divine love, but above all does pure prayer. By it the mind is given wings to go ahead to God and becomes alien to all things' (*Car.* 1. 11, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 52). Divine love is ecstatic, wrote Ps-Dionysius in the *Divine Names* (*Div.nom.* 4. 13). Maximus echoes this by saying that, 'We need the blessed passion of holy love' (*Car.* 3. 67, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 176). Once the mind reaches God and abides with God through prayer and love, it 'becomes wise, good, powerful, benevolent, merciful, and forbearing; in short it takes on almost all the divine qualities in itself'. When it withdraws from him, however, and goes over to fondness for material things, it becomes pleasure-loving or fights like a wild beast over these things (*Car.* 2. 52).

(p. 404) In stressing the central role of love, Maximus is very clear that virtue has a two-fold object, God and our neighbour. 'A rational soul that nourishes hate for a person cannot be at peace with God' (*Car.* 4. 35). In support of this, he does not hesitate to quote the Lord himself about forgiving the offences of others being necessary for having our own offences forgiven by God (Matt. 6: 14–15). Moreover, he finds much material, especially in Paul, on the central place held by love, for example, 'And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection' (Col. 3: 14); 'The commandments … are summed up in this saying, [namely], 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself. Love does no evil to the neighbour; hence, love is the fulfilment of the law' (Rom. 13: 9, 10); and the Apostle concludes, 'So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love' (1 Cor. 13: 13).

'There is nothing more deiform than divine love, nothing more mysterious, nothing that lifts people up more toward deification … It is the fullness of the law and the prophets', writes Maximus in his beautiful tribute to this virtue in his letter to John the Chamberlain (*Ep.* 2, PG 91. 393BC). He continues in this Pauline vein by saying that it sums up in one universal idea what the individual commandments express only in part. Love is the completion (συμπλήρωσις)

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of faith and hope, fully embracing the supremely desirable and bringing their movement towards him to rest. For faith in God's existence and hope for Christ's coming it substitutes the enjoyment of the divine presence. Only love makes us see that human beings are in the image of the Creator when they wisely submit their free will to reason, persuading their will (γνώμην) to walk in harmony with nature without any rebellion against its *logos* (*Ep.* 2, PG 91. 396C).[4] It is precisely here that, in working out this theological point, Maximus slips into an improper (though common) usage about the oneness of will that later in the heat of the monothelite controversy he will have to disown. According to this *logos,* he reasons, since we all share the one human nature, we should have only a single intention and a single will (μίαν γνώμην καὶ θέλημα ἕν) (PG 91. 396C).

Maximus explains the mystery of evil and its cure in this way in *Letter* 2. When in Eden the devil appealed to the self-love of human beings and seduced them into pursuing pleasure, he separated our will from God and from others. In thus destroying the will's rectitude, he divided nature by tearing it up into a multitude of opinions and imaginations (δόξας καὶ φαντασίας), from which have resulted all kinds of evil in human history, the most fundamental of which being ignorance (ἄγνοια), self-love, and the tyranny (τυραννίς) exercised by their interaction.

As this misdirection of humankind's proper powers, reason, and the concupiscible and irascible elements of their make-up came about through their own willing, as well as the devil's trickery, God, out of love for us, took on human nature to restore purity to the forces of nature and renew the power of selfless love as an opponent to the self-love that (p. 405) brought about the first sin. When self-love as the principle and source of evils is uprooted, what springs from it will also be removed. Then all kinds of virtue which the power of love embraces will enter in to reconcile what is divided. Selfless love causes us to resemble God, who out of love for us took on our human nature to bring us back to himself.

Love of Neighbour

For Maximus, love for God and love for neighbour are the same. This is not the case with Evagrius. Maximus writes that the clear proof of perfect love for God is a generous attitude of voluntary benevolence towards our neighbour, and he quotes 1 John 4: 20 in support of this (*Ep.* 2, PG 91. 401D–404A). Love is expressed in good works (*Car.*1. 39, 40). As a monk who had resided in a series of different monasteries, Maximus was familiar with the stresses and challenges of the common life, and in the *Centuries* he deals frankly with them. The work includes wise insights of Evagrius which he is content to retouch and pass along to his readers. Thus they may be regarded as reflecting the general state of the Byzantine monastic tradition of his day. We may consider the chapters under several headings, with references given from the *Centuries on Love*.

(i) Self-Love

Self-love, as already noted, is the mother of all the vices, the passionate and irrational affection for the body. It is opposed by love and self-mastery. The one who has self-love has all the passions (3. 7, 8; 2. 59). The beginning of all passions is love of self, and the end is pride (3. 57). Self-love suggests that we be kind to the body and indulge it more than is appropriate. But this may be a ruse to drag us into the pit of voluptuousness (2. 60). Self-love is the cause of all passionate thoughts (3. 56). It even is the cause of intemperance and hatred of neighbour (3. 7). As the Apostle tells us, even if we have all the gifts of the Spirit but lack love, it profits us nothing (1. 54). And as love works no evil to one's neighbour, 'the one who envies his brother and is unhappy over his good name and smears his reputation with scoffing or in any way maliciously contrives against him' is a stranger to love and liable to eternal judgement (1. 55).

(ii) Thoughts and Objects

The demons attack us either through thoughts or their objects (2. 71). As Sherwood notes (1955a: 86), the ascetic's struggle is mainly with thoughts and memories (λογισμοί), which can be either simple or compound if accompanied by passion (2. 84). There are three general moral states of monks. The first is not to sin in deed, the second is not (p. 406) to linger over passionate thoughts in the soul, and the third is to look with a detached mind if the forms of women or of those who have offended us arise in the mind (2. 87). Detachment is the state where no ideas of the world ever disturb the mind (1. 88).

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(iii) Grudges

Maximus spends a good amount of time discussing the holding of grudges, a common enough temptation in social and even religious communities. When one experiences a hurt, a feeling of resentment arises and lodges in the memory, and this leads to carrying a grudge for the offending party. This is an offence against the law, as Maximus shows, quoting Proverbs 12: 28 and 21: 24 (*Car.* 3. 89). Maximus links grudge-bearing to other vices: 'It is characteristic of the one who still loves empty glory or who is attached to some material thing to take offence at others for the sake of passing things, or to bear them resentment or to have hate for them or to be a slave to shameful thoughts' (*Car.* 4. 41, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 210). Thus the mind has to be purified of anger, resentment, and shameful thoughts to know the indwelling of Christ (*Car.* 4. 76). How does one heal from bearing a grudge?

> If you bear a grudge against anyone, pray for him and you will stop the passion in its tracks. By prayer you separate the hurt from the memory of the evil which he did you and in becoming loving and kind you completely obliterate the passion from the soul. On the other hand, if someone bears you a grudge, be generous and humble with him, treat him fairly, and you will deliver him from the passion.
>
> (*Car.* 3. 90, Berthold 1985: 73–4)

No longer bearing grudges is a sign of deliverance from vainglory (*Car.* 4. 43). Not nursing any grudge against the one who has harmed you or spoken ill of you is also a sign of spiritual maturity and an indication that you have reached the full level of detachment (ἀπάθεια) and pure love (*Car.* 4. 42).

In *The Ascetic Life,* Maximus offers an exquisitely tender thought from the old monk. He says to the young brother:

> If you always are attentive to what has been said above, you can have that awareness, but provided you understand that as you are tempted, so also your brother is tempted; that you pardon the tempted and, by refusing to respond to his trick, withstand the Tempter, who wants to bring you to a hatred of the tempted.
>
> (*LA*, Van Deun 2000a: 35–7; Sherwood 1955a: 113)

(iv) Knowledge (*gnosis*)

Knowledge is good by nature, but in the wicked it is not good because it is used unprofitably (*Car.* 2. 77). Maximus is clear enough on the point that nothing made by God is evil, but false knowledge of the world, ignorance of its nature, *logos*, is brought on by (p. 407) immoral behaviour, keeping passionate thoughts, and consenting to sin (*Car.* 3. 34). The mind and the will are distinct, but related to each other. They are both necessary and must both be upright. 'The one who has been gifted with the grace of knowledge but still has distress, resentment, and hate for his brother is like the person who stings his eyes badly with thorns and burrs. Knowledge is for that reason in need of love' (*Car.* 4. 62, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 220).

(v) Equal Love

It is characteristic of human beings to have varying degrees of love for one another. This is not how God loves. In the *Centuries* Maximus counsels his brother monks to work against extending varying degrees of love for others. In doing so he departs from Evagrius' statement that it is impossible to love all the brothers equally (*Prak.* 100). Distinguishing varying degrees of love is equivalent to splitting artificially the single nature that we share for reasons that are unimportant. It is allowing dispositions to qualify the generosity of our love. Instead, we should have equal love for all others without exception. This is how God loves (*Car.*1. 61), and we should strive to imitate God. Certainly, the zealous are more lovable and the wicked less so, but we can love the former as friends and the latter as enemies. Jesus Christ suffered for humankind and gave all people the hope of resurrection, though each one renders himself worthy either of glory or of punishment (*Car.* 1. 70, 71). This rather surprising and challenging position is one that Maximus is insistent upon, for the same love we have for God has to extend to every person that God has created. Six times in the *Centuries* he mentions it while linking it to God's perfect love for us.

As the purpose of the Incarnation was love (φιλανθρωπία) (*LA,* Van Deun 2000a: 23–4), so must it be the purpose of our actions as well.

(vi) Imitation

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Maximus' distinction of image and likeness leads naturally to the correlative notion of imitation (μίμησις). This neo-Platonic term is transformed in the thought of Maximus by virtue of its direct reference to Christ. The restoration of a tarnished image and the dynamic building up of the divine likeness imply a conscious imitation of the Logos made flesh, who in his person and life has renewed both nature and life. The new life in Christ, according to Galatians 2: 20, is a transformation of the person to the likeness of God after the perfect pattern of Christ's humanity (*Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 34–5; Berthold 1985: 104). Who can be faithful to all the numerous commandments, asks the young brother in *The Ascetic Life*? The one who imitates the Lord and follows in his footsteps, answers the old monk (*LA, prol.,* Van Deun 2000a: 9). Maximus writes, 'The one who loves Christ thoroughly imitates him as much as he can' (*Car.* 4. 55). Then he points to the virtues of Jesus, especially in enduring the insults and pains of his passion, all the (p. 408) while maintaining love for his persecutors and forgiving them. The chapter seems to be inspired by 1 Peter 2: 21–5, with its explicit mention of the Lord's 'leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps'. Only God is good by nature, and only the one who imitates God (θεομίμητος) is good by his will (*Car.* 4. 55). He returns to the scene of Christ's passion in his commentary on the *Our Father*:

> He restores nature to itself not only in that having become man he kept a free will tranquil and undisturbed in the face of nature and did not allow it to become unsettled in its own movement in a way contrary to nature even in the face of those who were crucifying him; he even chose death at their hands rather than life, as the voluntary character of the passion shows, which was accomplished by the dispensation of love for men (φιλανθρώπῳ) by the one who underwent this passion.
>
> (*Or.dom*. prol. 2, Van Deun 1991: 34–5; Berthold 1985: 104)

In handling temptations from the demons to deviate from God's will, we look to Christ our model, who was tempted by them in the desert and later by the Pharisees (*Car.* 2. 13). We have as well the example of apostles, martyrs, and saints to follow. Stephen, like Christ, forgave his murderers in the very act of his martyrdom (*Car.*1. 37; Acts 7: 60), as did others. Paul is a particularly good example of discipleship. As Christ 'was crucified out of weakness' (2 Cor. 13: 4), Paul was weak as to himself, yet boasted of his weaknesses that the power of Christ might dwell in him (2 Cor. 12: 9) (*LA*, Van Deun 2000a: 31; Sherwood 1955a: 111). In the conclusion to *The Ascetic Life*, Maximus gives a fervent exhortation to imitate the saints in their Christian heroism:

> Let us emulate the holy athletes of the Saviour. Let us imitate their combats … Let us imitate their tireless course, their flaming eagerness, their perseverance in continence, their holiness in chastity, their nobility in patience, their endurance in long-suffering, their pity in compassion, their imperturbed meekness, their warmth in zeal, their unfeignedness in love, their sublimity in lowliness, their plainness in poverty, their manliness, their kindness, their clemency. Let us imitate the divine Apostle. Let us lay hold on the author of life, let us rejoice in the fountain of life. With the angels let us make chorus, with the archangels let us hymn our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be glory and power together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and for endless ages. Amen.
>
> (*LA*, Van Deun 2000a: 121–3; Sherwood 1955a: 135)

(vii) The Liturgy

This last paragraph (above) of *The Ascetic Life* would seem to justify von Balthasar's (1941) insight that the vision of the world presented by Maximus is a cosmic liturgy. In it he has described the human condition as a whirling experience of conflicting states: of pleasure and pain, elation and dereliction, agony and ecstasy. The states, *tropoi,* of human existence are so varied and conflicting that it seems well nigh impossible to (p. 409) discern the nature, *logos*, of human life. Only in Christ can a cosmic reconciliation come about between Creator and Creation, God and man, intelligible and material realities, heaven and earth, paradise and the rest of the world, male and female—fundamental dualities he discusses in *Amb.* 41 and *Q.Thal. 48.* It is not only a reconciliation, for God and humankind meet in the mystery of Christ, whose Incarnation out of love has enabled our divinization through love. Maximus concludes the *Centuries*: 'Therefore, the one who possesses love possesses God, since *God is love* (1 John 4: 8). To him be glory forever. Amen' (*Car.* 4. 100, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 238).

Louis Bouyer perceptively observes that the *Mystagogy* is the work where Maximus most appears as the father of Byzantine spirituality (Leclercq et al. 1961: 651). The work is clearly addressed to a community of monks, although of profit to all the baptized. In the monastic state, especially, there would be a tension between contemplation,

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requiring silence and privacy, and the church's liturgy, which by definition is public prayer. Both are essential, but they need to be related in a harmonious way. On a basic level, and in the spirit of Ps-Dionysius, to whom he pays respect, Maximus sees the church as an icon of God insofar as it effects 'by imitation and in figure' the same union among believers as does God (*Myst.* 1, Boudignon 2011: 10; Berthold 1985: 186). It is clear that in writing of the eucharistic liturgy Maximus is describing an experience of genuine sacramental efficacy. As the church's icon, it brings together the countless number of distinct and varied peoples into one designation and form in Christ in an unconfused union with God as cause, principle, and end (Berthold 1985: 187–8).

Because of this sacramental principle, Maximus, perhaps inspired by Hebrews 10: 25, urges all Christians not to abandon God's holy church, where angels take note of the presence of worshippers and make supplications for them; and also because the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is always invisibly present, is there in a special way at the time of the holy synaxis: 'this grace comprehends, in the sacred order of the divine symbols which are celebrated, such great mysteries of our salvation'. This grace is morally transformative, 'and changes each person who is found there and in fact remolds him in proportion to what is divine in him and leads him to what is revealed through the mysteries which are celebrated' (*Myst. 24,* Boudignon 2011: 55–6, and 66; Berthold 1985: 206, 21).

Neither priest nor bishop, Maximus could yet eminently appreciate the profound symbolism of eucharistic communion, by which we are given fellowship and identity with God by participation in likeness to Christ. Maximus distinguishes image from likeness on the basis of the latter's voluntary character (*Car.* 3. 25, *Centuries on Knowldege* 1. 13). In the present life we already have a share in the gifts of the Holy Spirit 'through the love that is in faith', and in the future age after we have kept the commandments to the best of our ability, we shall share them in very truth in their concrete reality, when we shall pass from the grace which is in faith to the grace of vision, 'when our God and Saviour Jesus Christ will indeed transform us into himself by taking away the marks of corruption and will bestow on us the original mysteries which have been represented for us through sensible symbols here below' (*Myst. 24,* Boudignon 2011: 58–9; Berthold 1985: 207–8).

(p. 410) Transformation of the Passions

The mystery of Creation, of our creatureliness, is the mystery of the tension between *genesis* and *stasis* which Maximus, in opposition to Origenism, sees in a very positive light. The mystery of becoming has to be completed through the realization of the orientation towards deification which we received in the mystery of our coming to be. According to this mystery, as Maximus explains it, God always wants to become human in those who are worthy of it, and conversely, humans can become God by grace in a continual deification (*Q.Thal.*22, Laga–Steel 1980: 143). In this way, there is a reorientation of human energies now fixed on their natural goal, which is the realization of humankind's basic desire (πόθος) for union with God. The monoenergistic heresy had, according to Pyrrhus of Constantinople, predicated a single energy in Christ in order to distinguish divine activity from the human, which, he insisted, was passive in the face of the divine energy. Maximus is quick to react to this error, which would logically conclude that everything good is divine and everything human is evil (*DP*, PG 91. 349CD). In Christ's perfect humanity, understood in an orthodox dyenergistic way, the activity is genuine, natural, and free. If human activity is to display these qualities, then a true process of disengagement from destructive and enslaving passions must be entered into and a genuine liberation effected. In Christ the way is open for a higher sacramental existence, one of voluntary and ascetic transformation of human life.

This transformation of the passions begins here on earth with the redirection of our human energies in the ascetical struggle for virtue. Negatively, Maximus reminds the monks in the *Centuries*, certain ascetical practices traditional to monastic life 'check the passions in their movement and hinder their advance and increase', while others diminish them and make them decrease (*Car.* 2. 47, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 116). Thus 'fasting, hard labour, and vigils do not allow concupiscence to grow, while solitude, contemplation, prayer, and desire for God decrease it and make it disappear'. In the case of anger, 'long-suffering, the forgetting of offences, and meekness check it and do not allow it to grow, while love, almsgiving, kindness, and benevolence make it diminish' (*Car.* 2. 47, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 116).

Gregory of Nyssa had spoken at length of the dynamic of a moral transformation of human energy. For him, virtue is without master, voluntary, free of all necessity (*In Cant.* 5, Langerbeck 1986: 161). Maximus closely follows Gregory on the subject of this moral transformation. Passion is the bondage of human energy and virtue is its

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liberation. The new Creation will right this relationship by using the senses as instruments of virtue, as the law of the passions had used them for sin. The passions take on a new face once they are freed of their servitude to the law of the flesh. With express reference to Gregory of Nyssa, *Q.Thal.* 1 presents a tableau of transformed human energy. Desire, concupiscence, becomes a spiritual appetite moving in search of divine realities. Pleasure becomes a harmless delight of the mind's volitive energy over the divine gifts. As Maximus expresses it in the *Centuries*, it turns into 'a never-ending divine desire and an unceasing love, completely changing over from earthly things to divine' (2. 48). Fear (p. 411) becomes a protective diligence guarding us and assisting us against future offences, while sorrow becomes a restorative repentance for present evil. Like a viper that can be used by a skilled physician to heal infections, a passion can be used to acquire and safeguard virtue (*Q.Thal.*1, Laga–Steel 1980: 47).

Confession

Monk, philosopher, theologian, and spiritual father, Maximus has always been best identified as the Confessor. In Christian usage, a confessor is one who has distinguished himself by upright doctrine and purity of life, and who has witnessed to his faith by suffering cruelly harsh treatment. Maximus himself found inspiration in Paul's admonition to 'walk in the Spirit' (Gal. 5: 16). In this passage and in Romans 13: 12–14 (interestingly, the very passage the reading of which was the turning point in Augustine's conversion), the Apostle contrasts life in the spirit with a life of gratifying the flesh's desires. In his reading of Psalm 23, Maximus sees the Shepherd's comforting rod and staff as God's providence and judgement (2. 99), two functions that govern our life on earth. During his exile in Bizya, Maximus was visited by Bishop Theodosius, who straightaway asked him how he was. The answer Maximus gave was, 'As God pre-ordained before all ages a way of life for me in his providence, that's how I am' (*DB* 3, Allen–Neil 2002: 77). Puzzled by this reference to Romans 8: 29, the bishop asked about matters 'from us' and those 'not coming from us'. Maximus replied, 'The matters which are from us are all acts of volition, that is to say, virtues and vices. Those which are not from us are inflictions of kinds of punishments which happen to us, or their opposites …'. With reference to his present exile, Maximus explained, 'I pray that, by this suffering, God may limit the punishments of which I was guilty in sinning against him by transgressing his commandments, which bring justification' (*DB* 3, Allen–Neil 2002: 79).

In enduring the sufferings, privations, and shame of his exile and captivity, Maximus is living out the spiritual truth that he wrote about in the *Centuries* and recommended to monks for their purgation and testing. He warns young monks that they will be tested in the monastery, especially by thoughts of sadness and discouragement (*Car.* 1. 52). These are to be courageously borne as they come through God's dispensation. As our Lord instructs us (cf. Matt. 5: 11–12), we are to bear evils willingly (*Car.* 1. 62). Undergoing hardships can lead to the conquest of pride (*Car.* 2. 43). While resisting temptation can take away past or present sins or even cut off those which could be committed (*Car.* 2. 45). In brief, 'In no way can the sinner escape the judgement to come unless he takes on here below voluntary hardships or involuntary afflictions' (*Car.* 2. 66). In *Q.Thal.* 47 Maximus had written that when the mind frees the bodily members from the passions, it learns to be moved by the simple reason of nature. Then it can joyfully accept weakness, tribulations, and necessities. By enduring involuntary pains, it eliminates the domination of the passions (*Q.Thal.* 47, Laga–Steel 1980: 321). The interplay between (p. 412) providence and judgement is one that expresses itself in a world of genuine but flawed human freedom.

Suggested Reading

For a discussion of Evagrius and the Origenist controversy of the sixth century, see Guillaumont 1962. A helpful summary of present discussion about the real or supposed Origenism of Evagrius is given in O'Loughlin 1992; see also Dalmais 1966.

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Notes:

([1]) *Amb.Io.* 48, PG 91. 1361; *Q.Thal*. 22, PG 90. 321C; *Opusc.* 1; *Q.Thal*., prol. Maximus speaks of a natural appetite or desire of the mind for God (Q.*Thal*. 61, Laga–Steel 1980: 47).

([2]) *Car.* 2. 8, Berthold 1985: 47 with n.69, and Berthold 1985: 91, where other references are given.

([3]) *Q.Thal*. 48, Laga–Steel 1980: 339–41, referring to 2 Chr. 26: 5–15. See Dalmais 1967.

([4]) This whole paragraph is more translation than paraphrase. In praying against being led into temptation and away from the Evil One, the Christian overcomes the law of the passions and restores the principle of nature, making 'free will a partner of nature' (*Or.dom.*, Van Deun 1991: 69; Berthold 1985: 117; see Berthold 2011: 179).

George Berthold

George C. Berthold is a Catholic priest in the Archdiocese of Boston.

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Liturgy as Cosmic Transformation

Thomas Cattoi

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In an exploration of the liturgical theology of Maximus the Confessor, the author highlights the inner congruence between Maximus' understanding of liturgical *praxis* and his commitment to Chalcedonian Christology and soteriology. Relying mainly on the *Mystagogia*, but also on excerpts from the *Ambigua*, the *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, and the *Liber Asceticus*, the author charts Maximus' constructive appropriation of Chalcedonian Christology, and his use of the Chalcedonian paradigm as the lynchpin of his anthropology, his cosmological vision, and his theology of the spiritual life. Maximus' rendition of the hypostatic union as the healing of ontological difference within human nature and within the totality of the created order enables him to understand the liturgy as a cosmic event, where the different moments in the liturgical action, as well as the different parts of the building where the liturgy occurs, signify the eschatological transfiguration of the universe in all its diversity and particularity.

Keywords: Mystagogy, Chalcedonian Christology, Christian anthropology, soteriology, praxis, cosmology

THE purpose of this chapter is to explore the liturgical dimension of the theological vision of Maximus the Confessor (*c.*580–662), highlighting its Christocentric and specifically Chalcedonian character, while also exploring the mutual coherence and complementarity between his approach to individual asceticism and his understanding of the public worship of the church. A review of some passages from *Myst.* and his other major works, mainly *Amb.* and *Q.Thal.*, will illustrate the intricate web of correspondences between Maximus' christological synthesis, his mapping of the inner life of the individual, and his critical appropriation of elements from the theological legacy of Origenism. The chapter will outline Maximus' understanding of individual practice as a simultaneous pursuit of contemplation (θεωρία) and practice (πρᾶξις) which gradually accomplishes a radical reconfiguration of interiority, as well as a gradual healing of the whole created order that was disfigured and fragmented by sin. In this perspective, the celebration of the Eucharist anticipates and simultaneously gestures towards an ultimate eschatological horizon, where difference and plurality are no longer symptoms of ethical and ontological disorder, but become privileged channels of the deifying grace of the Word.

Maximus the Confessor's Chalcedonian vision

Throughout his writings, Maximus the Confessor presents the event of the hypostatic union as the hermeneutic event that discloses the inner congruence of God's cosmological plan. On one hand, the life of the incarnate Christ provides the benchmark for the life of all Christians, who are called to achieve holiness by a gradual integration of their (p. 415) own sensible and intelligible faculties. On the other hand, the dynamic interrelationship between humanity and divinity as they indwell the hypostasis of the eternal Word offers a benchmark to start exploring the mystery of the natural order—a kaleidoscope of signs, where the inescapable reality of created difference rests within the overarching intelligence of the Word (von Balthasar 2003: 235–40). The Chalcedonian understanding of

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Christology, read through the lens of sixth century neo-Cyrillianism, and further nuanced by Maximus' own reflection on the two wills of Christ, serves as a conceptual springboard for the development of a comprehensive worldview, where natural contemplation and the practice of the virtues pave the way to individual deification (θεῶσις) no less than to an all-encompassing cosmic transformation (Thunberg 1995).

While it would go beyond the purview of this chapter to review the genesis and the contested *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of the Chalcedonian definition, it may be useful to recall that the purpose of the conciliar definition was to come to a consensus regarding the relationship between the person of Christ (πρόσωπον) and his two natures (φύσεις). One of the chief concerns of the school of Antioch emerging clearly from the writings of its chief representatives—such as Nestorius and Theodoret—was to preserve the integrity of the humanity of Christ, which had come under attack in the writings of Apollinaris. The danger of this approach, of course, was that Christ's humanity, albeit in full union with the eternal Word, could be construed as being invested with an independent agency and autonomy. In opposition to this tendency, the Alexandrian school had emphasized that God alone could be the saviour of humanity, since death and sin could not be overcome by the merits of the humanity of Christ (Bathrellos 2004: 10–24). Cyril of Alexandria rejected the *homo assumptus* ('humanity having been taken up' [by Christ]) theory for this very reason, and argued that the relationship between the divinity and the humanity of Christ could not consist in the cooperation of two distinct realities that were ontologically equal. For the author of *On the Unity of Christ (De unitate Christi)*, one could not postulate two separate subjects within the person of Christ: rather, the principle of subjectivity of all Christ's actions was the eternal Word, who had chosen to assume our common human nature to restore the latter—and the whole cosmos—to their prelapsarian condition (Bathrellos 2004: 24–7). While Cyrillian Christology located the source of agency squarely in the hypostasis of the Word, it also emphasized the soteriological centrality of Christ's humanity—a reality which was wholly 'appropriated' by the second person of the Trinity, and would thereby become the lynchpin of the economy of salvation, as well as the paradigm for deification of each and every member of the human race (Meyendorff 1975: 74–86).

In 451, the Chalcedonian definition clarified some of the well-known ambiguities of Cyril's language—such as his problematic expression 'one nature' (μία φύσις)—and would establish that the 'one and the same Christ, Son, Lord Only begotten' should be acknowledged 'in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation (ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀχωρίστως)' (Meyendorff 1975: 25–6). This union in no way erased the distinction between the two natures, but fully preserved their distinct characteristics even as they concurred in the single divine hypostasis. It would be the task of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 553, to make explicit what was arguably already implied by the Chalcedonian definition, and assert the full (p. 416) ontological identity between the principle of subjectivity in the hypostatic union on one hand, and the second person of the Trinity on the other (Bathrellos 2004: 54–6).

Although Maximus the Confessor lived and worked two centuries after the Council of Chalcedon, the decisions of that assembly shaped the intellectual and theological horizon of his work and provided the starting-point for his anthropology, his cosmology, and his theology of the spiritual life. His liturgical theology, therefore, is no less Chalcedonian than his Christology because, for Maximus, the Chalcedonian definition was far more than the hermeneutic to the mystery of the hypostatic union; since the whole universe is patterned after the mystery of the Logos, who created the universe and chose to become incarnate for our salvation, the Chalcedonian definition is also the most reliable key to understanding the mystery of the created order as a whole (Tollefsen 2008). For Maximus, it is not just the two natures of Christ that rest in the eternal Word in an unconfused and undivided manner: it is the whole universe that dwells in the embrace of the eternal Word, who preserves and maintains its unfathomable diversity and particularity (Cattoi 2010).

If everything is patterned after Christ, clearly the inner dynamics of the hypostatic union are analogous to the inner dynamics of the created order as a whole. This christological dialectic of unity and multiplicity can be discerned within each and every member of the human race, and provides a template for our ascetic practice: all human beings are called to integrate the different aspects of their inner lives, as well as their souls and bodies, into a higher, harmonious unity (Thunberg 1985). Finally, given that our individual spiritual trajectory has a Chalcedonian pattern, the same categories can be applied to the inner dynamics of ecclesial life. The church is a reality that encompasses an endless multiplicity of members; and just as Christ's humanity and divinity within the hypostatic union are not erased by an idiosyncratic—and soteriologically ineffective—*tertium quid*, similarly all members of the church become part of the mystical body of Christ without losing their distinct ontological integrity. In this

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Chalcedonian perspective, the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist becomes a narrative exposition of this christological trajectory, whose dynamic refractions illumine the mystery of the church as a sacrament of human salvation (Loudovikos 2010).

The World of the *Mystagogy*

Maximus' chief liturgical work is the *Mystagogy,* a relatively short treatise that includes an introduction, twenty-four chapters of varying length, and a conclusion. The term 'mystagogy' (μυσταγωγία) indicates initiation into a mystery, and is often applied to the celebration of a sacrament, such as baptism or the Eucharist. In the first pages of the work, Maximus mentions by name the 'most holy and divine interpreter' Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite: in acknowledging his indebtedness to the Dionysian treatise *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, Maximus notes that it would be presumptuous of him to discuss the insights already presented in that work, and therefore he will limit his discussion to (p. 417) topics Dionysius had chosen not to address (*Myst.*, Boudignon 2011: 6–7). He then goes on to claim that he had the opportunity to hear the teachings on the holy liturgy (συνάξις) that were given by 'an old man', and that these teachings were 'especially rich in teaching values'. Yielding to the pressure of many of his acquaintances, he thus resolved to put down these teachings in writing, before time stripped his memory 'of all the good things it has stored up'. This 'old man' has been identified as Sophronius (560–638), the patriarch of Jerusalem who had been Maximus' superior at a monastery in Carthage. As noted by George C. Berthold (1985), however, this figure could be literary fiction, reflecting Maximus' desire to imitate the constant references of Ps-Dionysius to his master Hierotheus.

While Maximus' *Mystagogy* is one of the first examples of the great tradition of Byzantine liturgical theology—predating by a few decades the essay *On the Liturgy* by Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople (650–730)—its goal is not to offer a detailed description of the liturgical rite, but to outline a liturgical theology that emphasizes the cosmic, Christocentric dimension of the liturgical action, as well as its fundamental transformative import. The liturgy is an itinerary of inner and outer transformation, where fragmentation is replaced by ordered harmony, and where the transfiguration of the inner life of the individual overflows into the gradual deification of the cosmos as a whole (von Balthasar 2003: 315–26). Maximus' dazzling intellectual virtuosity, as he unveils the net of correspondences between inner and cosmic transformation, bestows extraordinary dignity on even the most seemingly insignificant liturgical action, each of which appears pregnant with extraordinary salvific potential.

A completely different hermeneutic approach to the *Mystagogy* may be found in Pascal Mueller-Jourdan's remarkable monograph (Mueller-Jourdan 2005). Rather than locating Maximus' liturgical theology in the context of the debates about the reception of Chalcedon or the legacy of the Origenist movement, Mueller-Jourdan explores Maximus' indebtedness to neo-Platonic philosophy, comparing the spiritual purpose of the *Mystagogy* and the propaedeutic function of philosophy in the late-antique period. While acknowledging the merits and the originality of this alternative reading, this present chapter will continue to approach Maximus the Confessor as first and foremost a theologian and a master of the spiritual life.

In the first section of *Cosmic Liturgy*, his monograph on the theology of Maximus the Confessor, Hans Urs von Balthasar notes that Maximus' *oeuvre* possesses 'synthesis' as its inner form (von Balthasar 2003: 65–73). The Swiss theologian, of course, had a well-known liking for the sweeping philosophical vision of German idealism, and his reflections on the legacy of Maximus reflected his fascination with the *Weltanschauung* of Hegel or Schelling. When applying the term 'synthesis' to Maximus, however, he was not suggesting that the seventh-century theologian had anticipated the insights of later German philosophers such as Hegel. Rather, von Balthasar was hinting at Maximus' ability to read the whole of reality—the vastness of the cosmos and the depths of the human soul, the tragedy of a cosmos wounded by sin and the unfathomable design of divine providence—through the one, single prism of the Incarnation (2003: 277–84).

(p. 418) Christ is therefore the one concrete universal; the key that unlocks all mysteries; the paradigm of deification; and finally, the one from whom the cosmos emerged and in whom the cosmos will finally find rest (Blowers and Wilken 2003: 16–18). In him, all difference (διαίρεσις) is healed and finds its resolution. In the same way as the natures of Christ blend while remaining unconfused (ἀδιαιρέτως), through Christ all elements of Creation are destined to enter into a harmonious symphony of plurality while preserving their own distinct identity. The event of the Incarnation, according to Maximus, is an event that ratifies, and indeed exalts, the plurality of the

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cosmos, which the consequences of sin can obfuscate, but never erase (Törönen 2007).

The Lingering Influence of Origenism

Maximus' preoccupation with the dialectic of unity and multiplicity throughout the *Mystagogy* reflects his ongoing engagement with the tradition of Origenism, something that characterizes his work as a whole (see Mueller-Jourdan 2015), as attested by numerous passages in the *Ambigua* and the *Car*. Maximus was writing a century after the condemnation of Origenism by the synod of Jerusalem in 543 and by the Council of Constantinople ten years later, but the continuous re-emergence of Origenist themes and terminology over a century after its condemnation by the institutional church seemed to attest to the seemingly irrepressible character of this current of thought (Guillaumont 1962; Meyendorff 1975: 47–57). The question of which of the positions condemned in the sixth century could be attributed directly to Origen of Alexandria (*c*.185–254) and which had instead been formulated by his followers continues to divide and frustrate scholars, and a discussion of this problem goes beyond the scope of this chapter. The writings of Maximus the Confessor, for their part, are characterized by a frequent use of Origenist terminology and concepts, revealing not only the extent of Origen's influence on the emergence of his theological vision, but also the depth of his disagreement with the cosmological and anthropological beliefs of the Alexandrian master and his later followers. Among the latter, an important role was played by Evagrius Ponticus (345–99), one of the leading monastic writers of the fourth century, and indeed one of the most influential spiritual writers of all time, whose thought was transmitted to the West by the *Institutiones* and the *Collationes* of John Cassian (360–435) (Driscoll 2005).

One of Evagrius' most cryptic texts—and one that has survived only in two different Syriac versions—is the *Gnostic Centuries*, which offers us an entrée into the extraordinary cosmology and soteriology of its author.[1] For Evagrius, ontological plurality is simultaneously a symptom and a consequence of ethical deficiency: the universe had (p. 419) first come into being as an undifferentiated noetic insight, whose primordial unity had been wounded and destroyed by the self-preoccupation (ἐπιμέλεια) of different rational beings (λογικοί), who had turned away from God and had precipitated into the world of matter. Within this cosmological narrative, angels, demons and human beings are nothing but rational beings who have forsaken their intimacy with the divine, and whose different stations in the universe reflect the extent to which they have fallen away from their original condition. Thickness (παχύτης) indicates the fallen condition of these rational beings, whose original nature was utterly immaterial and noetic (Guillaumont 1958; 1962).

Within this paradigm, which is evidently characterized by a neo-Platonic contempt for matter, movement (κίνησις) is yet another symptom of ontological disorder alongside plurality and matter. The Origenist triad of rest—becoming—movement (στάσις—γένεσις—κίνησις) encapsulated Origen's pessimistic worldview, where an initial, homogenous condition without movement or plurality (στάσις) had been disrupted by the emergence of separate subjectivities (γένεσις) leading inevitably to plurality and movement (κίνησις) (Tollefsen 2008: 75–6). In this perspective, the whole panoply of the natural world, with its endless variety of shapes and forms, was emphatically not part of God's original plan, but a medicinal afterthought, which would help rational beings start their painful return to their original condition. Similarly, according to the author of the *Gnostic Centuries*, the purpose of ascetic practice could only be the ultimate erasure of movement and ontological difference, and a return to the original undifferentiated noetic insight (Guillaumont 1962).

Maximus the Confessor is familiar with Origen's triad of rest–becoming–movement (στάσις—γένεσις—κίνησις), but his own version turns its order into becoming—movement—rest (γένεσις—κίνησις—στάσις), radically subverting its underlying ontological assumptions. For Maximus, 'becoming' (γένεσις) has to come first, because the Creation of the material world, with all its different elements, could not be an afterthought determined by the deplorable falling away of the λογικοί, but had to be part of God's original plan. Movement (κίνησις), rather than something pathological to be gradually overcome, would then emerge naturally as an innate characteristic of all creatures living in the world. Finally, the rest (στάσις) that crowns this process is very different from its Origenist counterpart: the final noetic insight of Evagrius seemingly suppressed all difference between the various rational beings (λογικοί), whereas Maximus envisages this final condition of 'rest' as the culmination of a process of individuation, where the different rational beings are confirmed in their orientation to the good, but retain their specific identity and can enter into reciprocal relationships marked by love (ἀγάπη) (von Balthasar 2003: 351–4; also Thunberg 1995: 317–20; Louth 1996: 66–8).

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The narrative of the *Mystagogy* is fundamentally the narrative of Maximus' triad—an initiatory process, whereby the community of the faithful anticipates in the present the mystical restoration of all things that will come at the end of time. The dialectic of unity and multiplicity that informs the whole work is conceptualized in different ways at different points throughout the work, though all of them are grounded in an overarching Chalcedonian vision where the contingent and the material become channels (p. 420) of God's salvific grace. *Myst.* 1, for instance, claims that God is 'origin, principle and consummation' of all created things: God is the origin as God is their creator, God is their principle—given that God rules over them with divine providence—and God is also their consummation, as God is the goal towards which the whole of the universe moves (*Myst.* 1, Boudignon 2011: 11). From the very beginning of *Myst.*, plurality is not presented as 'alternative' to the divine; rather, God is the organizing principle of ontological difference.

Within the context of earlier neo-Platonism, there was no developed notion of ontologically distinct 'natures' (φύσεις); rather, individual λογικοί constantly reshaped their being by their choices, and floated in a universe marked by ontological fluidity, where the boundaries between humans, angels and demons were not yet hermetically sealed (von Balthasar 2003: 131–3). For Maximus, on the contrary, 'natures' are a predetermined matrix of ontological development which each element of the created order receives at the onset of its existence, and which cannot be modified at will by their choices (Thunberg 1995: 72–80). In this perspective, created beings can be known rationally by means of their own inner principle (λόγος); at the same time, they have the freedom to use this nature in different modes (τρόποι). Choosing one existential path over another (for instance, monasticism over marriage) reflects a particular orientation of one's individual τρόπος, but does not entail a difference in the *logos*, which is part of God's plan for the universe. In a christological perspective, moreover, the conceptual distinction between the principle of each nature (λόγος τῆς φύσεως) and its mode of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) helps us understand how Maximus construes the inner dynamic of the hypostatic union. As the eternal Word is the subject of each and every one of Christ's actions, the τρόπος of his humanity actualizes the full potential of our shared human nature, and constitutes the final horizon of our own individual praxis (Cooper 2005: 113, 133–4). It is for this reason, then, that the life of Christ—which is the subject of Maximus' extensive reflections in *LA*—is the inescapable benchmark of our ascetic practice.

Unity and Multiplicity in the *Mystagogy*

The first chapter of *Myst.* presents the church of God as 'working for us the same effects as God, in the same way as the image reflects its archetype' (*Myst.* 1, Boudignon 2011: 12). Of course, we know by faith that God is the creator of the world, and of everything which the world contains; we trust that God is guiding the world towards its final transfiguration through the decrees of his inscrutable providence; and we believe that God's self-disclosure to humanity culminated in the event of the hypostatic union. What Maximus adds to this series of assertions is the claim that God's redemptive work, which is spearheaded by the eternal Word, continues today through the pedagogical (p. 421) and liturgical action of the church. If we can say that Christ is the head of his mystical body, we can say by analogy that God is the chief actor of the liturgy; and the church itself, with all its parts, can be said to be an image and a figure of God. In God, all elements of Creation 'converge in each other' by way of their relationship to the One who is their origin; all things mingle with each other 'in an unconfused manner' by way of their relationship with their ultimate cause, who transcends—and simultaneously reveals—the fundamental meanings of their individual existence (Cattoi 2010; Loudovikos 2010). Just as God grounds difference ontologically, the church heals the same differences whenever they are wounded and disfigured by sin. In this way, the different members of Christ's body are no longer 'strangers' or 'enemies' to each other, nor do they 'dissolve into non-being' because of sin, but show each other 'friendly or peaceful sentiments' (*Myst.* 1, Boudignon 2011: 13–4).

It is interesting to observe how at the outset of the *Mystagogy*, God—and not the Word!—should deign to behave in a Chalcedonian manner. Just as the hypostasis of the eternal Word sustains the humanity and the divinity of the incarnate Christ, God uncovers and guards the individual natures that populate the universe. The church mirrors God's creative action: while members of the ecclesial community differ from each other in all sorts of ways—gender, age, nationality, intellectual inclination—the church offers the same sacraments and the same Spirit to all, enabling them to be reborn into a 'single, simple, whole, and indivisible condition'. Maximus cites Acts 4: 32 ('for all had but one heart and one mind') and Galatians 3: 28 ('for there is neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Greek, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision'), but Christ is 'everything' in all (*Myst.* 1, Boudignon 2011: 13).

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Myst. 2 addresses the problem of unity and multiplicity from a different perspective, namely, that of the relationship between intelligible and sensible substances. Origen's suspicion of contingency ensured that knowledge of the divine reality would be construed as utterly beyond the reach of the senses; Evagrius Ponticus, for his part, warned his monastic audience of the danger of remaining entangled in the contemplation of the created order, since God dwelled radically beyond all matter and form.[2] Maximus, on the contrary, suggests that our experiential knowledge of God is in profound continuity with our experiential knowledge of the natural world, and thereby anchors all mystical experience explicitly and firmly within the created order (Thunberg 1995: 176–92). This continuity between intellectual and sensory knowledge is illustrated by a comparison with the building where the celebration of the liturgy is held—a building which Maximus views as 'a figure and image of the entire world composed of visible and invisible essences' (*Myst.* 2, Boudignon 2010: 14–5). Just as the material world is filled with bodily forms and natures, and the spiritual world is filled with incorporeal substances, the nave, symbolizing the senses, is peopled by all the faithful, whereas the sanctuary, (p. 422) symbolizing the intellect, is assigned to priests and ministers. While the two parts of the building serve different purposes, between them there is an underlying unity, since the nave and the sanctuary derive their meaning from the celebration of the liturgy for which they are built. In the same way, sensible and intelligible realities inform each other: without the latter, the senses could not ascend to know the divine, and without the former, the intellect would have no springboard to move beyond itself.

Other writings by Maximus similarly explore this rootedness of divine experience in the sphere of sensory perception, sometimes emphasizing the latter, and sometimes its re-elaboration by the intellect. In *Q.Thal.,* for instance, we are told that the sensible aspect of transcendental experience gives way to the intellectual dimension as we progress in our spiritual practice (*Q.Thal.* 24, Laga–Steel 1980: 157). Commenting on the animal sacrifices of the old dispensation, Maximus associates 'the flesh' with the practice of the virtues, but he links 'the blood' with the higher insights of contemplation (*Q.Thal.* 36, Laga–Steel 1980: 244–5). In the *Mystagogy*, however, Maximus tempers this assertion of the superiority of the intellect with an extensive reflection on the mutual complementarity of the intelligible and the sensible aspect of cognition (*Myst.* 2, Boudignon 2011: 16–7). It is not a coincidence that the intellect should be symbolized by the nave, where Christ becomes present in the gifts of bread and wine: the spiritualization of matter that is accomplished by incorporeal intelligence is fundamentally a type of the great transformation taking place in the hypostatic union, where humanity is transfigured by the divinity even as it retains its ontological integrity. The Incarnation of Christ ensured that his humanity was deified, and yet his divinity needed his humanity to accomplish his salvific task; in the same way, sensible realities need the intellect to articulate and conceptualize what they experience, and at the same time the intellectual dimension of Creation needs a 'lower' material counterpart to actualize its potential (von Balthasar 2003: 284–91). The approach offers an implicit, and yet robust corrective to Evagrius' understanding of transcendence, where an experience of the divine could only follow a deliberate shedding of all knowledge of Creation.

Myst. 4 and 5 move on to explore the relationship between the liturgical building and the different components of the individual person (Boudignon 2011: 18–31). These sections give us an insight into the anthropology of their author, and also evidence Maximus' indebtedness to the tradition of early Christian monasticism attested in the *Sayings of the Fathers (Apophthegmata patrum)*. Earlier in the fourth century, Evagrius Ponticus had drawn a distinction between the soul's intelligible part (the νοητικόν) and its passible counterpart (the παθητικόν). He divided the latter into a lower, vegetative part (the ἐπιθυμητικόν), whose chief concerns were food and sexual activity, and an incensive part (the θυμικόν), which was the seat of anger and ambition. Maximus' *Centuries on Love*, as well as passages from *Ambigua*, reveal the influence of Evagrius' cartography of inner life,[3] but in the *Mystagogy*, Maximus modifies this mapping of (p. 423) interiority by distinguishing between a higher 'intellectual' faculty (νοερὰ δύναμις), and a lower, 'vital' faculty (ζωτικὴ δύναμις); the former is said to 'move freely' and to be the vehicle of rational discourse, whereas the latter functions 'without choice' under the sway of the passions. The intellectual faculty is supposed to direct all its 'movements' (κινήσεις) towards God, therefore cultivating wisdom (σοφία); the vital faculty, for its part is called to govern the practical activity of the individual, and gradually acquire 'prudence' (φρόνησις). In this context, the mind (νοῦς) is the mover of the intellectual faculty and the seat of the contemplative power, whereas reason (διάνοια) is the mover of the vital faculty and the seat of the active power.[4]

Once more, the goal of spiritual practice is to integrate these two aspects of the human personality, and the relationship between the nave and the sanctuary can also be said to represent the relationship between διάνοια

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and νοῦς. If the vital faculty is properly used, the individual will engage in the practice of the virtues (πρᾶξις), whereas the intellectual faculty will cultivate the habit of contemplation (θεωρία). Maximus is certainly no supporter of *sola fide*; indeed, in the *Q.Thal.*, he quips that, 'If one were to search for God through contemplation without actions, one would not be able to find [God]' (*Q.Thal.* 48, Laga–Steel 1980: 338). If both faith and works are present, however, the totality of the human person will be transformed. Maximus compares the soul to a spiritual lyre with ten strings, representing five pairs of complementary aspects of our common nature: 'mind and reason, wisdom and prudence, contemplation and action, knowledge (γνῶσις) and virtue (ἀρετή), and finally enduring knowledge (ἄληστος γνῶσις) and faith (πίστις)' (*Myst.* 5, Boudignon 2011: 23). If they are tuned correctly, the ten strings can play the melody of the Ten Commandments, in imitation of Christ who alone 'restores me, in a marvellous way, to myself'. As in the case of the unity between intelligible and sensible reality, the underlying unity between the different parts of the church building which are functional to the celebration of the Eucharist intimates the harmony between the different parts of the soul which is finally 'crowned' by the eternal Word of God.

This reconfiguration of the inner life, however, has a more explicit christological dimension as well, where the individual is called to discern the providential marks that the eternal Word has scattered throughout the cosmos (Louth 1997). Once more Maximus retrieves elements of the earlier tradition in a creative manner, and turns to the classical teachings of the 'seeds of the Word' (λόγοι σπερματικοῦ) that we find already in Origen and Athanasius. In his treatises *Against the Arians* and *On the Incarnation*, for instance, the latter presented a vision of the eternal Word of God who encompassed a countless number of λόγοι, and through them guided the development of each and every aspect of the created order (Anatolios 2004). In *Myst.* 5, Maximus similarly notes that in Christ, the Creator and Maker of all beings, 'all the principles (λόγοι) of things (p. 424) both are and subsist as one in an incomprehensible simplicity' (Boudignon 2011: 30). The individual soul, on the contrary, is characterized by disharmony and fragmentation, as the intellect is often unable to resist the pull of the passion (Thunberg 1985, 1995).

The purpose of spiritual practice is, of course, to overcome the fragmentation resulting from subordination to the passions. Eventually, and gradually, the individual can be transformed after the pattern of the eternal Word, who contains within himself and simultaneously transcends the multiplicity of all principles and causes. While Maximus does not develop this theme in the *Mystagogy*, his vision is broadly congruent with the Alexandrian tradition that distinguished between God's image (εἰκών) and God's likeness (ὁμοίωσις), and envisaged the former as a given characteristic of our shared humanity, and the latter as the goal of spiritual practice (Thunberg 1995: 113–20; Zhivov 1987). In this perspective, the image is the *logos* of our nature that grounds us in the very being of the eternal Word, and provides a structure to the activity of our νοῦς as well as to the activity of our διάνοια. The likeness is attained through our τρόπος, as we effectively *use* our nature to pursue θεωρία and πρᾶξις (Thunberg 1995: 120–31). The Incarnation of the eternal Word transposes this dialectic to a higher ontological level, as the event of the hypostatic union ensures that our common humanity is now mingled with the divinity of Christ, without confusion and without separation.

As we move into the central sections of the *Mystagogy*, we find that Maximus' reading of liturgical space and action becomes more overtly, if not explicitly, christological. *Myst.* 7 explores how the harmony between the church and the world, no less than the harmony between the church and the individual soul, is grounded in the mystery of the eternal Word (Boudignon 2011: 33–6). While the unity of sensible and intelligible realities mirrors the union of humanity and divinity in the incarnate Christ, the harmony of the different faculties of the soul resembles the chorus of the λόγοι σπερματικοί teeming around the eternal Word. Maximus is then able to say that the whole world, comprising visible and invisible substances, is like 'a human individual', and that every human individual, comprising a body and a soul, is like 'a world' (von Balthasar 2003: 291–7). The church building with its distinct parts serving different functions is merely the concrete manifestation of this sweeping parallelism between macrocosm and microcosm, with the hypostatic union providing the hermeneutic *trait d'union* (Thunberg 1995).

An interesting aspect of *Mystagogy* is the analogy between the 'three men'—the individual human being, the world, and holy scripture (*Myst.* 7, Boudignon 2011: 35). This passage is a concise articulation of Maximus' belief in the inner harmony between the law of nature, the law of scripture, and the event of the Incarnation—a concept that is developed at greater length in the *Ambigua* as well as *Questions Addressed to Thalassius*. In *Amb.Io.* 10, for instance, Maximus uncovers this mystery in the transfiguration narrative in the Synoptic Gospels, and claims that the garments of the transfigured Christ are invested with an extraordinary symbolic polyvalence. On one hand, these garments symbolize the whole of the created order, in its entire contingency and particularity. On the other

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hand, these garments symbolize the inspired books of scripture that make up the Old and the New Testament. At the same time, the transfigured Christ who is wrapped in these garments is none other than the eternal Word—the Word who sustains (p. 425) and structures the cosmic order, while also providing unity and meaning to the inspired writings, attesting God's covenant with humanity (Cattoi 2009: 51–61).

In *Amb.Io.* 10, this majestic vision of cosmic harmony ensures that the hypostasis of the eternal Word—Christ's sole principle of subjectivity—should similarly function as the 'subject' of scripture and the divine intelligence guiding the cosmos. In *Myst.* 7 Maximus develops an analogous argument by noting that there is a profound congruence between the law of nature, the law of scripture, and our own inner life, provided of course that the latter is ordered to the pursuit of θεωρία and πρᾶξις (Boudignon 2011: 35–6). Maximus invites us to consider the eschatological transformation of our own bodies; on the last day, the latter will acquire the properties of our souls, and become 'like intelligible things in dignity and glory' (*Myst.* 7, Boudignon 2011: 35). If we are ready to use the different 'parts' of our nature in line with their underlying *logos*, we will become like the eternal Word (Cooper 2005; Tollefsen 2008). Again, God is 'the cause' which 'holds all things together by God's existence' in an unmixed and undivided mode (ἀδιαιρέτως and ἀσυγχύτως), in the same way as he preserves both natures in the hypostatic union. What Maximus is suggesting in *Amb.Io.* 10 and in *Myst.* 7 is that the law of nature and the law of scripture have an eternal validity, but their true import is only revealed by the event of the Incarnation, and only those familiar with the mystery of Christ can fully understand its meaning (Louth 1996: 52–4, 94–6). It is not by chance that only three of the Lord's disciples were deemed worthy to accompany him on Mount Tabor: Peter, James and John were chosen because they alone had achieved the necessary stage of detachment (ἀπάθεια) that enabled them to behold the vision of the transfigured Christ (Louth 1996: 94–6; also Cattoi 2009: 53). In the world of *Mystagogy*, we are similarly called to 'take care of the soul which is immortal, divine, and in process of deification through the virtues', and similarly 'disdain the flesh which is subject to corruption and death and able to soil the soul's dignity'. Those who are able to follow these injunctions will 'find God engraved on the tables of their hearts', and 'with face unveiled'—like the disciples on Tabor, and unlike Moses on Sinai—'will see as in a mirror the glory of God'.

The Cosmic Mediation of Humanity

By this point in the *Mystagogy* it is clear that while the Origenist solution to the problem of difference ultimately pointed to its erasure, Maximus' Chalcedonian commitment ensures that, in his vision of the cosmos, ontological difference can be healed and eschatologically preserved. To explore this question more exhaustively, it may be useful to look at *Amb.Io.* 41, a text which also addresses the question of the redemption of plurality from a christological perspective, and therefore echoes the intent of *Myst.* 5 and 7. In this *ambiguum*, Maximus lists five different divisions (διαιρέσεις) which characterize the created order, and which individuals are called to overcome as they move towards deification: the division between the created and the uncreated realm, the division (p. 426) between intelligible and sensible reality, the division between heaven and earth, the division between paradise and the οἰκουμένη (the inhabited world), and the division between male and female (Thunberg 1995: 373–425).

John Meyendorff (1975: 139–40) summarizes how, according to Maximus, human beings can overcome these divisions, starting from the division between male and female, and working their way towards the division between the created and the uncreated realm. By way of ἀπάθεια, we can transcend the division between the sexes; by way of holiness, we can create a single new world, and thereby unite paradise and the οἰκουμένη; through the practice of the virtues, we can ensure that God's will be done 'on earth as it is in heaven', and thereby unite heaven and earth; through the acquisition of a knowledge that is worthy of the angels—a point repeatedly made in the *Mystagogy*—we can bring together the sensible and the intelligible world; finally, by way of love (ἀγάπη), we can respond to God's love for Creation and create a never-ending dialogue of love between God and humanity, thereby bridging the gap between the created and the uncreated realm.

As we learn in *Amb.* 41, Christ was, of course, the first to carry out this mediatorial task (Louth 1996: 63–5). In him, there was no male or female; his unsurpassed holiness brought together paradise and the οἰκουμένη; he obeyed God most fully and therefore united heaven and earth; his knowledge surpassed that of the angels, and reconciled the intelligible with the sensible; and finally, he dwelt in a constant communion of love with God, his heavenly Father. In his earthly life, Christ recapitulated within himself all these polarities; now, those who choose to be Christ's disciples are called to continue the work of Christ in their own lives. Just as Christ occupies a middle

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position in Creation, mediating between the natural order and the eternal Father, humanity straddles the divide between the tangible world of matter and the spiritual world of the angelic powers (von Balthasar 2003: 285–91). According to Lars Thunberg, for Maximus humanity was actually created to fulfil this mediatorial task, which would restore the disfigured cosmos and re-establish harmony between creator and creature (1995; also Louth 1996: 155–6). As we are reminded in *Myst.* 7, 'the whole world, made up of visible and invisible things, is a human being (ἄνθρωπος)' (Boudignon 2011: 33); all members of the human race partake in these five divisions within their very being and, as such, their pursuit of θεωρία and πρᾶξις has an individual, as well as a cosmic impact (Louth 1996: 42–3, 63–4).

The Liturgy and Spiritual Warfare

In the central chapters of *Mystagogy*, Maximus moves on to consider the liturgy from a more diachronic perspective. He thus focusses on different successive moments in the liturgical celebration, though he continues to interpret them in a broadly Christocentric perspective, highlighting the intrinsic reciprocity (παράδωσις) between the inner dynamics of the hypostatic union and the trajectory of the individual striving to attain deification (Loudovikos 2010). Maximus is keen to emphasize that while we are called (p. 427) to follow Christ, the economy of salvation was inaugurated by Christ's appearance in the flesh, without which our penance and all our efforts would be futile. In *Myst.* 8, we are reminded that the celebration of the liturgy can only begin after the ἀρχιερεύς (the high priest) has entered the church and has ascended the throne in the sanctuary (Boudignon 2011: 37). The procession of the celebrant through the nave—and up into the space where the sacrifice is actually celebrated—symbolizes Christ's entry into the world and his return to heaven; while the earthly priest moves on to celebrate the Eucharist so as to share with us the gifts of Christ's love, the incarnate Word returns to his kingdom to prepare a place for us. Even the congregation's entrance into the liturgical space acquires a special incarnational meaning. If Christ's self-abasement and his descent into the flesh marked his entry into the world of plurality, the entrance of the people into the church of God constitutes a sort of reverse κένωσις—a letting go of one's passions and attachments, which obfuscate the image of God in us and prevent us from raising our minds to him.

According to Maximus, entering the place where the liturgy is celebrated should signify far more than a mere formal acceptance of the truths of the faith: rather, it should suggest a radical rejection of sin and the beginning of the gradual acquisition of ἀπάθεια. In this perspective, the church becomes a symbol of the virtues that Christ himself practised during his earthly life after assuming a human body. Hans Urs von Balthasar notes that for Maximus, as for Ps–Dionysius before him, liturgical worship is the place where the individual comes to experience a 'holy fear', an awareness of one's utter insignificance in the eyes of the divine majesty. Any individual who experiences longing for God is also bound to experience fear, stemming from an understanding of one's own worthlessness (von Balthasar 2003: 328–30). In his *Or.dom.*, Maximus notes that authentic love of God is 'the outcome of fear and desire, consisting of reverent hesitation and attraction'. If one truly experiences this love, one will feel bound to respond by turning one's life wholly to God and letting go of one's earthly attachments. The liturgy is thus the communal expression of this love, which blends together an ardent desire for intimacy with God, as well as a deep awareness of human inadequacy. In *Car.*, Maximus waxes lyrical as he considers the soul's gradual discovery of God's immeasurable majesty: 'how is it possible then not to be filled with awe, as one begins to consider the origin and the source of the rational noetic substance, or the four elements from which all bodies emerged, given that there is no matter that preceded their Creation?' (4. 1–2).

Throughout the *Mystagogy*, Maximus reminds us that this deep ontological longing that binds all members of humanity to their divine Creator is also compounded by the intricate web of relationships that ties them to each other. On one hand, every creature possesses a distinctive ontological character that is unique and unrepeatable, and is not shared by anything else. On the other hand, in virtue of their very uniqueness, every creature is analogous to all others, as each has to play a role in the divine plan that cannot be played by anything else (Tollefsen 2008). The entire natural order is an intricate dialectic of similarity and diversity, where all aspects of Creation come together in their suspended centripetal movement around their divine source. In his writings, Ps-Dionysius had outlined the various tasks that the (p. 428) different levels of the cosmic hierarchy were called to accomplish in order to fulfil God's plan for the universe. In *Mystagogy*, Maximus does not explore this theme in a systematic or exhaustive fashion, but highlights how the vocation of humanity is different—and indeed, can be said to be even higher—than the vocation of the angelic choirs.[5]

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Let us consider Maximus' discussion of the divine readings in *Myst.* 10–13. 'The master' notes that they reveal 'the divine and blessed desires and intentions of God most holy' and that through them we receive 'in proportion to the capacity' which is in us 'the counsels' by which we should act (*Myst.* 10, Boudignon 2011: 39). The divine chants arouse the souls to hate sin with greater intensity, and move them towards the 'clear and blessed love of God' (*Myst.* 11, Boudignon 2011: 40). The ensuing salutations of peace that are directed by the celebrant to those who proclaimed the readings are 'divine favours' imparted by the holy angels to souls that are involved in the spiritual battle. God is well aware of the 'combats' of those who struggle 'against opposing forces', and in his gracious mercy, he chooses to bestow on them the grace of ἀπάθεια. With the help of the angels, the saints can 'disperse the armies of the evil spirits', and set out on the path of spiritual cultivation, that is, 'the accomplishment of the virtues' (*Myst.* 12, Boudignon 2011: 40–1).

The language of 'spiritual warfare' that characterizes this section once more reveals the influence on Maximus of the tradition of monastic spirituality found in the pages of the Evagrian *corpus*. If we look at his essays, *On Thoughts*, or his *Chapters on Prayer*, we see how Evagrius Ponticus talked at great length of the inner struggle faced by monks and hermits, who in the solitude of their cells had to face constantly the attack of demonic forces. 'After lengthy observation', Evagrius claims, it is possible to learn how to distinguish 'between angelic and human thoughts, and those that come from the demons' (*On Thoughts,* 8). If we consider the subject of gold, demonic thoughts will suggest to the intellect images of wealth and glory coming from its accumulation; human thoughts will bring to mind the simple image of gold, without any passion or greed; and angelic thoughts will investigate 'the natures of things' and encourage one to search for their 'spiritual principles'. If one pauses to ponder that gold is scattered in the depths of the earth, it is found with much work and effort, and it can be put into the hands of craftsmen who can fashion all sorts of utensils for the house of the Lord, one will come to understand that every aspect of Creation has a purpose that is intended by God and that is meant to support us in our own spiritual path. The scriptural readings and the greetings of peace that take place during the celebration of (p. 429) the Eucharist can then be seen as part and parcel of the Evagrian' pursuit of διάκρισις (discrimination), which is the starting-point of our spiritual path.[6]

Maximus is also clearly familiar with the traditional teaching on the three stages of the spiritual life, which Evagrius had inherited from Origen.[7] The first stage—which later would be called *via purgativa*—is the stage of inner purification: much as a gardener needs to uproot all weeds from a plot of land before planting flowers in it, we need to eradicate all sinful habits before we can proceed to practise the virtues. The soul that is under the sway of the passions is torn and fragmented; it cannot rise up to God, and it is cajoled to heed illusory promises of happiness that invariably prove to be vacuous. Once it achieves ἀπάθεια, however, the soul is finally able to contemplate the created order in a calm and detached manner. In this second stage of practice—later to be named *via illuminativa*—we gradually discover the spiritual essences (λόγοι) of all aspects of created reality (Louth 1997; Tollefsen 2008). The final stage, however, calls us to move beyond this world and to plunge into an experience of transcendence which is also an unmediated, direct participation in the divine. The reality that individuals encounter in the *via unitiva* is that of a personal God, who lures them beyond this world into the unfathomable depths of mystical communion.

The first two stages of this process can easily be identified in Maximus' reflections on the liturgical proclamation of the scriptures. If the earlier readings symbolized the spiritual struggle of the *via purgativa*, which was abetted by God through the support of the angels, the reading of the Gospel inaugurates the second stage, when individuals can move to contemplating the natural order. When the Gospel is read, the word of 'gnostic contemplation' (γνωστικὴ θεωρία) descends from heaven as a high priest to 'constrict their fleshly understanding' (*Myst.* 13, Boudignon 2011: 41). The closing of the doors and the entrance into the holy mysteries symbolize the intellect moving away from considering the things of this world to contemplating 'the vision of spiritual principle and realities'. This *via illuminativa* also entails the restoration of peace between all members of humanity, who enter into a communion of life with each other and with God 'through the kiss of peace'. The recitation of the creed symbolizes the 'grateful confession' of all believers, who offer thanks to God for having found them worthy of salvation.

Where Maximus differs from Evagrius and the Origenist tradition, however, is in his conceptualization of the final stage of practice. In the *Mystagogy*, Maximus mentions the intellectual worship which angels are incessantly giving to God, and in which humanity is called to participate. In *Myst.* 13 and 19, we are told that the Trisagion allows the participants in the liturgy to join their voices to the choir of the angels, as the former (p. 430) have received 'the

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same understanding of sanctifying theology' that is proper to the latter (*Myst*. 13, Boudignon 2011: 42). Commenting on the Lord's Prayer in another of his works, Maximus had already paused to reflect on the 'liturgy of the mind' offered in heaven by the celestial intelligences, and had observed that the invocation to do God's will 'on earth as it is heaven' hinted at the connection between the angels' intellectual worship and our call to grow in the contemplation of the divine (*Or.dom.*). According to Maximus, however, the goal of spiritual practice goes far beyond intellectual worship, as God's plan for humanity—fully disclosed in the Incarnation of the Word—is our deification and adoption as God's own children.

Deification and the Ratification of Individual Identity

The Chalcedonian theology of spiritual practice outlined in the *Mystagogy* is fundamentally an assertion of the eschatological ultimacy of personal identity: in the experience of deification, as we encounter the reality of the divine mystery, our own subjectivity—an irreversible gift of God's agapic love, with all its unique characteristics—will be ratified and affirmed as eternally enduring. In order to understand the full import of Maximus' claims, it is helpful to turn one more time to the sixth-century condemnations of Origenism. A number of the propositions that were the subjects of anathema, specifically 6–9 and 12, condemned the belief that there was an ontological distinction between Christ, on one hand, and the eternal Word of God, on the other (Meyendorff 1975; Boudignon 2011: 55). In this perspective, Christ was understood as a mind or an intellect (νοῦς), which at the moment when the λογικοί turned away from God was able to remain unmoved (ἀκίνητος) in his contemplation of the divine. Having remained above the fray of contingency and matter, this νοῦς eventually chose to enter the manifold embrace of plurality, and help all rational beings leave behind the material world and return to their primordial unity. In this perspective, different orders of being may have required different incarnations, as suggested by Anathema 7: 'Christ became all in all, an angel among the angels, a power among the powers, a human among the humans'. In the *Gnostic Centuries*, Evagrius Ponticus went as far as to suggest that Christ was the mere receptacle of the Word: 'Christ is not the Word at the beginning, and in the same way he who has been anointed is not God from the beginning' (*Keph.* 4, 17).

What were the implications of this belief, and how did they differ from the soteriological claims of the Chalcedonian paradigm that would replace it? If the goal of practice is the restoration of all νόες to their initial condition, at the end of time there will be no difference between Christ and all other λογικοί, 'neither by essence, nor by knowledge, nor by their powers and energy over the universe' (*Keph.* 5, 81). If this is the case, those rational beings that heeded the calls of their passions will share the same destiny as those who turned their minds to God and chose to practise the strictest asceticism: all of them (p. 431) will be ontologically identical to Christ. Because of this belief, which seemingly undercut the fundamental rationale of spiritual practice, supporters of this teaching earned the sobriquet of ἰσοχριστοί ('equal to Christ') (Guillaumont 1962).

Clearly, these conclusions were utterly unacceptable to those who accepted the Nicene teaching of the consubstantiality between the Father and the Son, as well as the later assertion of the presence of two distinct natures within the person of the incarnate Christ. For a Chalcedonian like Maximus, the Incarnation of the eternal Word constitutes a unique event that marks an irreversible turning point in the history of the cosmos and radically changes the nature of humanity's relationship with God. While we are called to imitate Christ in our lives, each according to our abilities and inclinations, we can never attain the fullness of divinity which Christ bore in his flesh. At the same time, as we can see throughout the *Mystagogy*, the goal of spiritual practice is not to retrieve an original condition that has been obfuscated by sin; rather, it is to accomplish an authentic transformation of our ontological condition, where our humanity is gradually, but irreversibly deified.

If we return to the passage in *Myst.* 13 where Maximus discusses the proclamation of the Gospel in the context of the liturgy, we can see that he connects it, not only with deification, but with divine adoption (υἱοθεσία). After their senses and intellects have turned away from the things of this world and the participants in the liturgy have joined the choirs of the angels, Christ—'the high priest'—'leads them to God the Father', having adopted them 'in the Spirit' (*Myst.* 13, Boudignon 2011: 42). A few chapters later, in *Myst.* 20, Maximus echoes this claim, noting that the prayer of the 'Our Father' is a symbol of the 'personal and real adoption' that is bestowed through the real gift and grace of the Holy Spirit (Boudignon 2011: 47). In *Myst.* 13, those who are destined to be God's children are first 'brought together' (συναχθέντας) by way of the divine kiss, and then are introduced to the presence of God (Boudignon 2011: 42). In *Myst.* 20, Maximus mentions instead the overcoming of 'every human particularity

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(ἰδιότης)' which is overcome and superseded 'by the irruption of grace' (τῇ ἐπιφοιτήσει τῆς χάριτος) (Boudignon 2011: 47). The term 'particularity' most likely indicates the human tendency to love oneself over and above others (φιλαυτία), which Maximus regards as the chief obstacle to progress in the spiritual life (*Car.* 3. 2). The eschaton of the *Gnostic Centuries*, where all differences are superseded, postulates an experience of the divine that is utterly devoid of relationality—and, indeed, utterly devoid of love. The eschaton of the *Mystagogy*, which is already present in the here and now of the liturgy, resembles more closely the celestial Jerusalem: a crowd of blessed thronging around the throne of the Father. The solution to self-love is not a world where love is no longer present, but a world where self-love is replaced by love (ἀγάπη), and God's love holds together the universe in all its plurality and contingency (Thunberg 1995: 232–47; von Balthasar 2003: 339–43). Even movement, which for Evagrius signalled the first fracture of the primordial order, is here fully redeemed, as the different actions of the liturgy come to symbolize the spiritual trajectory of humanity towards communion with the divine.

Analogous references to this dialectic of unity and multiplicity fill the central and final chapters of the *Mystagogy*, including the lengthy summary in chapter 24 that Bornert ascribes to the work of later scholiasts (Bornert 1966: 87–90). Rather (p. 432) surprisingly, Maximus does not address the question of the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic species, and in fact he bypasses the discussion of the anaphora altogether—a choice Bornert explains by pointing to the fact that in seventh-century Byzantium the words of consecration were already recited in silence (Bornert 1966: 107–8).[8] While the reasons for this omission are likely to remain unknown, we can learn more about Maximus' actual theology of the Eucharist from *Myst.* 21, which envisages the reception of the sacrament as the lynchpin of the process of deification. The acclamation, 'One is Holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ', which up to the present day continues to be recited by the congregation at the end of the service, represents the mystical union between all those who have been 'mystically and wisely initiated by God' and the 'mysterious oneness of the divine simplicity' (*Myst.* 21, Boudignon 2011: 48).

Prima facie, this claim sounds remarkably isochristic, as it seems to suggest a complete erasure of difference between the deified individuals, on one hand, and the divine nature, on the other. Maximus quickly nuances this claim, however, and notes that those who receive the sacrament (termed μύστηριον as in the writings of Ps–Dionysius, e.g. *Hier.eccl.* 3. 1 425A) are rendered 'similar' (ὁμοίους)—not identical!—to 'the causal Good' (God, who is κατ'αἰτίαν ἀγαθός), and this happens 'by grace and participation' (κατὰ χάριν καὶ μέτεξιν). Only Christ is Son according to nature (κατὰ φύσιν); everyone else is an adopted child according to grace (κατὰ χάριν) (*Myst.* 21, Boudignon 2011: 48).

The term 'participation' (μέτεξις) ensures that the recipients undergo an authentic ontological transformation, but the use of this term underscores that the integrity of their human nature is in no way compromised. On the last day, Christ shall truly be 'all in all', as the whole of Creation will be transfigured by the divine energies; the celebration of the liturgy is an instance of realized eschatology, anticipating in the present this all-encompassing transformation. At the same time, echoing the argument of *Myst.* 13, Maximus notes that we will be called gods 'by adoption' (θέσει), but will only receive the gift of deification 'to the extent that this is possible and attainable' (κατὰ τὸ ἐφεκτόν καὶ ἐνδεχόμενον) for human beings. Even the extraordinary power of the Eucharist cannot subvert or erase the boundaries between natures that are part and parcel of the fundamental structure of reality, and which will not be superseded even in the eschaton.

The Transfigured Cosmos

In the theological horizon of the *Mystagogy*, the eschatological redemption of particularity is anticipated in the liturgical and sacramental order, which transcends spatial and temporal limitations and makes manifest in the present time the event of (p. 433) the hypostatic union. By uncovering the Chalcedonian dimension of liturgical space and liturgical action, Maximus illumines their deeper christological significance and their role as mystagogical markers on the way to deification, showing that the liturgy serves a pedagogical and parenetic function, but its chief purpose is to provide a template for ontological transfiguration. On one hand, the different parts of the church building intimate the ordered dialectic of unity and plurality, whereby the eternal Word encompasses the ontological imprints of scripture and the created order. On the other hand, the different moments in the celebration of the liturgy adumbrate—and simultaneously accompany—a gradual transformative process, whereby the participants engage in a radical reconfiguration of their inner life. This reordering of the inner landscape, where the calmness of ἀπάθεια supersedes the fragmentation caused by the passions, raises the

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participants in the liturgy to the pinnacles of intellectual contemplation and, despite their unworthiness, introduces them to the mystery of divine ἀγάπη.

Maximus' theology of the liturgy is fundamentally a Chalcedonian reflection on the dignity of the created order, in all its contingency and unfathomable plurality. In the same way as the incarnate Word embraced and deified our common humanity, but preserved the integrity of both natures, all Christians are called to work for their own deification and for the transformation of the created order. In this perspective, the pursuit of θεωρία and πρᾶξις is not a solipsistic exercise geared to the achievement of an exalted spiritual 'state', nor a spiritualizing flight from the senses and ontological plurality as in Evagrius' *Keph.*, but part and parcel of the process of cosmic restoration that was inaugurated by the incarnate Christ. The liturgy is the highest instance of *imitatio Christi*, a creative engagement of the natural order that overcomes sin's ontological divisiveness and paves the way for the final transfiguration of the cosmos.

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Notes:

([1]) The two Syriac versions of the *Gnostic Centuries* (*Keph.*) were first published in Guillaumont 1958 with a French translation. Four years later, the same Guillaumont published his seminal study on the different impacts of 'Origenism' in the Greek and the Syriac world (Guillaumont 1962). The Syriac church was not impacted by the sixth-century condemnations as it had broken communion with the Greek-speaking churches in the aftermath of Chalcedon.

([2]) In his *Chapters on Prayer*, Evagrius warns his readers that demons are wont to attack them when they are in prayer, bringing before them 'some strange and alien form' and making them imagine that the Deity is there. Evagrius is adamant that 'the Divinity is without quantity and without form' (*Orat.* 67, PG 79. 1181B). Clearly, the spirituality of Evagrius is not particularly incarnational.

([3]) See, for instance, Maximus, *Car.* 1. 84–8; 2. 13–15, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 82–4, 94–6; *Amb.Io.* 10, PG 90. 1112A–D.

([4]) According to Evagrius, διάνοια should eventually be absorbed into νοῦς as the individual turns gradually away from the created order (see his writings *On Thoughts* and the *Chapters on Prayer*). For Maximus, however, an ordered διάνοια presides over the pursuit of πρᾶξις, whereas an ordered νοῦς enables the cultivation of θεωρία.

([5]) Ps-Dionysius claimed that the hierarchical arrangement of the visible church, much as the hierarchical arrangement of the choirs of heaven, reflected the different capacities of the various members of the hierarchy, who were led to deification in distinct ways; see *Hier.eccl.* 1. 2 (373A–B). According to this view, bishops, presbyters, and the laity are destined to different spiritual paths, in line with their hierarchical position. Maximus, for his part, simply distinguishes the high priest—who is a figure of Christ—and the community of the faithful.

([6]) Evagrius' teaching on διάκρισις had an enormous influence on the development of the tradition of the discernment of spirits (*discretio spirituum*); in *Car.*, Maximus himself retrieved Evagrius' classification of the vices. For a discussion of this theme in the writings of Maximus, see Thunberg 1995: 248–59.

([7]) Origen and Theodoret of Cyr saw the origin of these three stages in three successive books of the Old Testament: Proverbs, which corresponded to the *via purgativa*; Ecclesiastes, which corresponded to the *via illuminativa*; and the Song of Songs, which corresponded to the *via unitiva*. See Wright 2004: xvii.

([8]) Other authors offer yet different explanations. Brightman suggested that Maximus only discusses the parts of the liturgy in which the congregation—as opposed to the clergy—takes an active part; see Brightman 1895: 534–9. Even this interpretation, however, is not entirely convincing, as the *Mystagogy* also discusses the entrance of the bishop as well as the bishop's dismissal of the catechumens.

Thomas Cattoi

Thomas Cattoi is associate professor of Christology and Cultures at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University.

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The Georgian Tradition on Maximus the Confessor

Lela Khoperia

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Abstract and Keywords

Many of Maximus' works were translated into Georgian during the tenth to twelfth centuries in different literary schools. These translations, made with completely different methods of translation and literary aims, are valuable sources for studying Maximus' literary legacy per se. In many cases they preserved the lost Greek recensions of his works. They also provide precious data for research into Georgian–Byzantine cultural relations and the reception of Maximus the Confessor's literary legacy and thought in later centuries. The Georgian literary tradition has preserved three different recessions of *Vita Maximi*, which provide valuable information about Maximus' biography that is not found elsewhere. A rich local folklore tradition is also associated with Maximus' name. Study of this ethnographic material contributes to our knowledge of the last period of Maximus' life and enables us to reconstruct the tradition that took shape in Western Georgia in about the seventh century.

Keywords: Georgia, Georgian language, translations, Georgian Life of Maximus

MAXIMUS the Confessor was extremely popular in Georgia, in no small part because he was exiled to West Georgia near the end of his life, where he died, as is known from several written sources. Surviving Georgian sources relating to Maximus are numerous, and include most of his writings, as well as biographical documents related to him, translated into Georgian, sometimes more than once by various literary schools. His images survive on Georgian wall paintings and in manuscript illustrations. Maximus exerted a significant influence on subsequent Georgian ecclesiastical literature and theology, and his name is associated with varied ethnographic and folklore materials. This chapter gives an overview of the Georgian tradition concerning Maximus the Confessor, summarizes the major research findings on these topics, and demonstrates the importance of Georgian sources for the study of the life and literary legacy of this church Father.

Maximus' Literary Legacy in Georgian Translations

The majority of Maximus' works was translated into Georgian in the Middle Ages (see the list at the end of this chapter). These translations, made with various methods of translation and literary aims, are valuable sources for the study of Maximus' literary heritage per se, as in many cases they have preserved the lost Greek recensions of his works. They also provide precious data for research into Georgian–Byzantine (p. 440) cultural relations and the perception of Maximus' literary legacy and thought in later centuries.

A dramatic increase of interest in Maximus' works in Georgia is evident from the tenth to eleventh centuries. The first Georgian man of letters who began the task of translating Maximus' works towards the end of the tenth century was Euthymius the Athonite, founder of the Georgian literary School on Mt. Athos. It is noteworthy that, despite the great popularity of Maximus in Georgia, not a single work of his had been translated into Georgian before Euthymius' time, although many other outstanding Byzantine church Fathers were represented in Georgian

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ecclesiastical literature before Euthymius, by means of at least one translated text.

This fact might have several explanations, such as changes in the cultural situation and the evolution of spiritual interests in Georgia which greatly stimulated the introduction of new literary genres and new authors into Georgian literature in the tenth to eleventh centuries, the development of Georgian–Byzantine literary relations, and an increased interest in Maximus' literary heritage in Byzantium itself.

Translations by Euthymius the Athonite

The character of Euthymius' translations is determined by his unique method of translation. In all his translations, Maximus' works among them, Euthymius applied a very free translation method. Based on examinations of Euthymius' translations, two major types of textual changes in translation can be distinguished: the introduction of minor changes in order to refine the style and make the meaning clearer for the reader; and significant changes, such as excerpting and editing the texts under translation, inserting extensive interpolations from other sources, or compiling two texts into one (Bezarashvili 2004: 18–97; van Esbroeck 1988; Kurtsikidze 1978).

The basic goal of Euthymius' approach to his Greek models was to adjust his translations to meet the spiritual demands of his contemporary Georgian public, making them more accessible to the ordinary reader who lacked a thorough grounding in theology and philosophy. As his young contemporary put it, 'He fed the spiritual infancy of the Georgian readers with the milk of his translations' (Bregadze 1988: 149).

Euthymius developed this method in compliance with the Byzantine literary tradition of reshaping, excerpting, or interpolating texts for various reasons. Being a person of considerable erudition, he made creative use of this tradition, imitating the freedom of Byzantine editors to attain his own goals. However, sometimes he used as the original an already adapted version of the Greek text, which conformed to his aims (Bezarashvili 2004: 34–44). Thus it is often difficult to determine in a particular case whether it was Euthymius himself who compiled the texts, or whether he simply used a compiled Greek text when translating. Euthymius' translations of Maximus' writings, made in keeping with the same translation technique, often differ significantly from the known Greek originals: some of the texts are excerpted, others compiled, interpolated, or edited.

(p. 441) Questions Addressed to Thalassius

Euthymius' translation of Maximus' exegetical work *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* is a notable example of such a revision of the source text. Several scholars who have examined separate sections of this translation have surmised that this was a previously unknown recension of Maximus' work, into which Euthymius also inserted material absent from the original (van Esbroeck 1988, 1994; Kekelidze 1956). Ani Chantladze, based on investigation of the entire text, has demonstrated that this is a compilation of different works, comprising 100 questions and answers, instead of the sixty-five in Maximus' *Questions Addressed to Thalassius.* In particular, the Georgian translation contains sections from the latter and from Maximus' *Questions and Doubts*, sections from several collections of *Questions and Answers* by Anastasius of Sinai, and excerpts from some question-and-answer collections whose Greek source and author are so far unidentified (Chantladze 2009: 49–58). The text was identified as a translation of *Questions Addressed to Thalalssius* by its title, and by the first question-and-answer, which belongs to Maximus' opus. Cahntaldze surmises that there might have been a Greek model for this compilation of translations in the question-and-answer format, but it has so far proved impossible to trace. However, the hypothesis that the compilation was made by Euthymius should not be excluded (Chantladze 2009: 58).

Dispute with Pyrrhus

Another interesting example of the adaptation of Maximus' complex theological reasoning to the intellectual capacities of the common reader unversed in theology is Euthymius' translation of Maximus' anti-monothelite work *Dispute with Pyrrhus*. The translated text is reshaped to such an extent that it has become a new version of the work, and one aimed at a less educated public. Euthymius edited this text, relieving it of historical narrations that are of secondary importance to the main theme of the work, while transforming and clarifying the complicated logical reasoning of Maximus in various ways. Euthymius often neglected dialectical methods of argumentation and resorted to simplified paraphrase, conveying the essential points in a more comprehensible form, while occasionally expanding the text with his own commentary and arguments, thereby providing a somewhat simplified

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and yet comprehensive résumé of the text (Khoperia 1996).

Difficult Passages Addressed to John

Euthymius also translated one portion of *Ambigua Addressed to John*, which constitutes the later part of Maximus' renowned two books of *Ambigua*. In the Georgian manuscript collections of the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, translated by Euthymius, the homily *On the Nativity* (*Oratio* 38) is followed by a fairly lengthy text entitled 'Commentary (p. 442) on Difficult Passages from the *Homily on the Nativity* by our father Maximus the Confessor' (Metreveli et al. 2001: 121–219).

Otkhmezouri (1989; 2009: 73–8) has clearly demonstrated that Maximus' *Ambigua* to John, in particular the commentaries on the eight passages of Gregory's *Oratio 38*, may be considered to be one of the sources of this Georgian translation, which contains a total of 101 commentaries on the various phrases selected from Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oratio 38.* For the remainder of the Georgian translation, it was not possible in most cases to identify the Greek source, and only for some was the Greek model revealed in the tenth-century manuscript collection, *Sylloge* (Schmidt 2001: xiv, xxxix–xl), consisting of commentaries on Gregory of Nazianzus' homilies by Basilius Minimus and George Mokenos. However, in the Georgian tradition the whole text is ascribed to Maximus the Confessor. As Otkhmezouri surmizes, this could be conditioned by the fact that both by their volume (Maximus' eight explanations constitute almost half of the entire text) and their theological significance, these eight explanations are the most important parts of Euthymius' translation.

According to Otkhmezouri, today it is difficult to say whether the Commentary on *Oratio* 38 was compiled by Euthymius, as was frequently his practice, or whether he simply chose to translate a compiled Greek text. A work of similar composition has not been attested in the Greek manuscript tradition up to now.

Collections of Excerpts

A substantial portion of Euthymius' translations consists of collections of texts excerpted from various works by Maximus; there are several collections of ascetic chapters,[1] as well as the exegetical collection *Interpretations of Some Passages of the Gospel Selected from St Maximus' Writings*.[2] The composition of these collections calls for a special, targeted study; it needs to be determined whether these collections were compiled by Euthymius in imitation of the numerous Greek florilegia of Maximus' writings, which is probable if we take into account the specific characteristics of Euthymius' translation-editorial method, or whether in the Byzantine literary tradition there already existed florilegia with similar content which Euthymius simply translated into Georgian.

Life of the Virgin

With regard to Euthymius' translations of Maximus' works, special mention should be made of the *Life of the Virgin*. This work is preserved only in a Georgian translation, where it is attributed to Maximus. The Greek original of this work is lost, and there is (p. 443) also no mention of this work in the Byzantine literary tradition. Michel van Esbroeck, who has published the text, concludes on the basis of a detailed textual analysis that this is one of the earliest works of Maximus, translated by Euthymius around the year 980 (1986/2: v–xxxvi), although other scholars have questioned the text's authenticity (Toniolo 1991; Larchet 2003: 102–3; Shoemaker 2012).

Translations made at the Gelati Literary School

The translation of Maximus' works into Georgian continued in the twelfth century at the Gelati literary school, but employing completely different translation principles and aims, which corresponded with the changed cultural situation and spiritual requirements of that epoch.

The emergence of the philosophical-literary school of Gelati, a separate branch of the Georgian Hellenophile literary–intellectual trend, marked a significant stage in the evolution of Georgian thinking and the theory of translation. It was founded in western Georgia at the turn of the twelfth century and gathered renowned Georgian men of letters; many of them, educated in Constantinople, brought to Gelati the ideas and tendencies characterizing the advanced cultural world of Byzantium at that time. In fact, the Gelati school was a projection of eleventh- to twelfth-century Byzantine theology and philosophy onto Georgian soil (Melikishvili 2009: 105–6).

In the wake of the intellectual processes in Constantinople, the Gelati School was actively engaged in studying and

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translating classical philosophical works and neo-Platonics, theological and biblical exegesis. This necessitated the development and systematization of Georgian philosophical terminology, the elaboration of a Georgian scientific language, and a distinctive translating method appropriate to philosophical and theological literature (Melikishvili 1993/1: 7–8; 2009). Georgian translators of the Gelati school were seeking to reproduce the Greek originals with maximum precision, without violating even their formal framework, and to exploit the linguistic potential of Georgian language in order to render Greek philosophical terms adequately (Melikishvili 1986).

Translations of Maximus the Confessor's writings were made in the Gelati school in keeping with this translation method, producing highly accurate word-for-word translations, with the principles of formal equivalence observed as best as possible. Unlike Euthymius' translations, these detailed translations, reflecting all the nuances of Maximus' thinking, were intended for the highly educated reader well versed in theology.

It is interesting to note that some of Maximus' writings, earlier translated by Euthymius, were retranslated in Gelati, in accordance with completely different principles of translation. These are *Dispute with Pyrrhus, Questions Addressed to Thalassius*, and several parts of the *Ambigua*. A comparative examination of these translations from different epochs and literary schools provides extremely interesting material for the study of the development of Georgian translation theory, and demonstrates the shift of interest towards different aspects of Maximus' works in Georgia in different epochs.

(p. 444) Manuscript Collection K14

The twelfth-century manuscript collection K14 preserves the major part of Maximus' works translated atthe Gelati literary school, namely: the exegetical work *Q.Thal.*, the anti-monothelite polemical work *DP*, the exegetical work *Or.dom.*, most of the dogmatic-polemical treatises directed mainly against so-called monophysites and monothelites (*Opusc.*), and some of Maximus' epistles addressed to different persons (*Epp.* 45). The author of the translations is unknown. However, a linguistic-stylistic analysis of the text proves that all translations preserved in this manuscript definitely belong to the same translator. It should also be noted that the translations included in K14 are attested only in that manuscript, making it a unique example. Once belonging to the Gelati monastery, the manuscript is now preserved in the Kutaisi State Museum of History and Ethnography.

A comparative study of the translations included in K14 and extant Greek sources leads us to the conclusion that the immediate source of the first half of the Gelati collection was the first half of the Greek manuscript *Coislinianus* 90,[3] which once belonged to the Lavra of Athanasius on Mt. Athos and must also have passed through the hands of Georgians — this is corroborated by the Georgian pagination of the first part of the manuscript and a Georgian marginal note.

A structural-textual analysis of the Georgian and Greek manuscripts in question enables us to surmise that some Georgian man of letters, living and working most probably in the Georgian monastery of Iviron on Mt. Athos, removed the first half of the manuscript, that is eighteen cahiers, from the Lavra of Athanasius, where *Coislinianus* 90 belonged at the time. He left the second part of the manuscript there and on the margin of the first leaf of the part that was left (145r) made a note indicating the number of cahiers that were removed and those that were left: 'I, Daniel, took eighteen cahiers and twelve are here'. According to a paleographical analysis, the note dates from the twelfth century, and therefore it must be contemporary with the Greek manuscript. The examination of the manuscript *Coislinianus* 90 and its colophons indicates that, by the time Georgians had removed its first part, the manuscript had not been copied to the end. This also explains the fact that the manuscript was not bound, and consisted of separate cahiers, which made it possible to borrow part of the whole (Khoperia and Chantladze 2005; Khoperia 2009).

Here, in the Iviron monastery, which at that period was a significant and influential cultural centre on Mt. Athos, the first half of the Greek manuscript was supposedly copied, to be used subsequently as a model for translation. Afterwards, Georgians seem to have been unable to obtain the second half of *Coislinianus* 90, and so another Greek manuscript similar to it both textually and compositionally was used as the model for the translations included in the second half of the Georgian collection.

The history of the manuscript collection K14 is yet another indication of the lively cultural relations between Iviron Monastery and Lavra of Athanasius, which is attested by numerous other sources.

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(p. 445) Other Gelatian Translations of Maximus' Works

Apart from the translations preserved in K14, several other translations of Maximus from the Gelati School have also survived: *200 Chapters on Theology and Incarnation* (*Capita theologica et oeconomica*), *The Four Centuries on Charity* (*Car.*), and *15 Chapters* (*Cap. XV*) are preserved in several manuscripts, the earliest (A 39) dating from the thirteenth century, and separate sections of Maximus' *Ambiguorum Liber* are preserved fragmentarily only in the twelfth- or thirteenth-century manuscript A52.[4]

All these translations are anonymous. However, based on their linguistic-stylistic peculiarities, we can be relatively certain that they were produced at the Gelati literary school. These translations have not been studied so far in detail.

Fragments, Excerpts, and Manuscript Collections

Aside from the Georgian translations by Euthymius and the Gelati literary school, numerous manuscripts of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries contain texts attributed to Maximus. The identity of their translators, the date of their translation, and their attribution to Maximus call for further research.

Of particular interest are the separate fragments of Maximus' writings interpolated into works of other authors in Georgian translations. These fragments might provide interesting data from the viewpoint of the reception of Maximus' teachings in mediaeval Georgian literature. For example, the Georgian translation of one section of *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* was attached, as an extensive colophon, to the twelfth-century Georgian translation of John Damascene's *Expositio fidei* (Miminoshvili 1996), to complement the twenty-fifth chapter 'On Paradise', where John discourses upon the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge (Raphava 2009: 87–100). According to Raphava it was probably the Georgian translator of *Expositio fidei,* Arsen of Iqalto, who used a fragment from *Maximus'* work as a commentary on the Damascene's text which he translated. However, it cannot be ruled out that Arsen already had such a Greek model for the translation, although this scholion cannot be found in the extant Greek manuscripts of *Expositio fidei*. This example provides an interesting insight into the various modes of influence of Maximus' writings on mediaeval Georgian thought, and a baseline for determining what transformation Maximus' writings underwent in the following centuries.

(p. 446) Scholia on the *Corpus Dionysiacum*

Among Georgian translations attributed to Maximus, the Georgian version of the scholia (commentaries) on the corpus of Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite should also be mentioned. The complete *Corpus Dionysiacum* was translated into Georgian during the eleventh century by Ephrem Mtsire, a renowned representative of the Georgian hellenophile literary school of the Black Mountain near Antioch.[5] The entire text of the Dionysian corpus in all Georgian manuscripts is accompanied by scholia, also translated by Ephrem Mtsire. As was characteristic of all representatives of the hellenophile trend in Georgian literature, both the text and scholia were very precisely translated.

Based on the Greek manuscript tradition, it is commonly accepted that the main author of the scholia was John of Scythopolis and only a smaller section was written by Maximus the Confessor, although modern scholarship has not yet provided a definite answer to this issue.

In the Georgian version, the names of the authors of the scholia are only provided in the first six chapters of *The Divine Names*; from the seventh chapter of the treatise onwards, all scholia are anonymous throughout the whole Corpus. Unlike in the oldest Greek manuscripts, John of Scythopolis is not mentioned at all in the Georgian version of the scholia (Alexidze 2009: 113–32). Instead, 'Maximus' and 'Germanus' [of Constantinople] are named the authors of the scholia on the first six chapters of *The Divine Names*; besides, many of those scholia, which in some of the Greek and Syriac versions are ascribed to 'John', appear in the Georgian manuscripts under the name of 'Maximus' (Alexidze 2009: 115). As Alexidze suggests, in order to define the scholarly value of this attribution, further investigation of the Georgian scholia in relation to Maximus' authentic works is required.

Georgian Versions of Biographical Documents Regarding Maximus

Three Georgian biographical documents concerning Maximus have come down to us: Maximus' *Life* translated by

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Euthymius the Athonite, the synaxarian *Life* translated by George the Athonite in the eleventh century, and John Xiphilinos' metaphrasic *Commemoration*, translated in the twelfth century at the Gelati literary school. All three were translated from the Greek sources. This is important to mention when considering the two opposing traditions of Maximus' biography—the Graeco-Latin and the Syriac. However, a comparative analysis of the Georgian biographical documents with relevant (p. 447) Greek sources provides information concerning separate moments of Maximus' biography, and contributes to our understanding of the Greek textual tradition of the *Vita Maximi*.

The earliest and most extensive of all three Georgian biographical documents is Maximus' *Life*, translated by Euthymius the Athonite at the turn of the eleventh century (Kekelidze 1918: 60–103). My own study of this text (2003, 2005) provides grounds for concluding that Euthymius' translation is closest to the so-called 'fourth recension' of the Greek *Vita Maximi, Recensio Mosquensis* (BHG 1233m) (Muretov 1913–14; Epifanovich 1917: 1–10).[6]

A comparative textual analysis makes it clear that the Georgian translation in question was not made directly from the *Recensio Mosquensis* either, but that it preserved an unknown Greek recension, which could be identified as an independent, fifth recension of the *Vita Maximi*, and which at some points reveals a greater affinity to the hypothesized Greek archetype of *Vita* than any other extant recension. Euthymius' translation contains separate episodes that are unknown elsewhere, for example the narration of Maximus' first visit to Rome, and the minutes of the monothelite council held in Constantinople in 662, where Maximus and his disciple were put on trial. These are likely to have been taken by Euthymius from the now-lost source of his translation.

It also should be mentioned that Euthymius, in line with his habitual method of translation, interpolated into this translation extensive passages from other, easily identifiable sources such as Maximus' *DP* and Michael the Syncellus' *Expositio fidei*.

The synaxarian *Life* of Maximus' was translated into Georgian by George the Athonite in 1042–44 CE, and was included in his 'Great Synaxarion'.[7] This translation also does not follow any of the extant Greek sources exactly. Based on a comparative examination of this version and other relevant Greek sources, we may presume that George either used several Greek sources while translating, or else he availed himself of some contaminated Greek recension which has not come down to the present. Whatever the case, it is evident that George also used the extended Georgian *Life* translated by Euthymius, especially its description of Maximus' exile to Lazica. The Georgian synaxarian *Vita* also contains interesting data for research on Maximus' commemorations in the liturgy and for the localization of the toponyms in western Georgia associated with his name (Khoperia 2003: 411–13).

The third Georgian biographical document is the *Description of the deeds and martyrdom of Holy Maximus the Confessor, his disciple Anastasius, and Pope Martin* (Kekelidze 1955: 271–310), which Kekelidze identifies as Theodosius of Gangra's *Commemoration* (p. 448) *(Hypom.).* Solely preserved in the Georgian manuscript K1, now kept in Kutaisi Museum of History and Ethnography, the text is attributed to a Byzantine author from the second half of the eleventh century, John Xiphilinos, nephew and namesake of the patriarch of Constantinople, John VIII Xiphilinos.[8] The Georgian tradition has preserved the metaphrastic *Menologion* by Xiphilinos, which is unknown in Greek. This *Menologion* contained the *Description*, along with other saints' *Lives* surviving only in this Georgian translation. Therefore, the Georgian translation acquires the importance of a primary source. This very precise translation was made in the twelfth century by anonymous translator, in keeping with the translation method developed in the Gelati literary school, and it enables us to reconstruct its lost Greek original with reasonable exactitude.

Collation of the text with earlier pre-metaphrastic sources reveals that Xiphilinos availed himself of several Greek sources to create this metaphrastic redaction—the basic sources are the *Commemoration* (*Hypom.*, Allen–Neil 2002: 148–71) and the Greek *Life of Maximus* (BHG 1234), while he also borrowed from the *Chronicle* of Theophanes (de Boor 1883), Maximus' *Dispute with Pyrrhus* (DP, Doucet 1972), the *Record of the Trial* (*RM,* Allen–Neil 2002: 48–74), the *Dispute at Bizya* (*DB,* Allen–Neil 2002: 76–119), and the Greek *Life of Pope Martin I* (Peeters 1933).

In fact, Xiphilinos strove to create a text where a complete account of the monothelite controversy was given in broad outline. The central figure of the new metaphrastic recension was definitely Maximus. In addition, an extensive description of the deeds of other actors in the monothelite controversy was also presented. The text does not contain any new information, but it provides valuable material both for determining the interrelation of

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various Greek sources on Maximus and Pope Martin, and for studying the characteristic features of Xiphilinos' metaphrastic method and of the Greek metaphrastic tradition in general.[9]

The Place of Maximus' Imprisonment and Burial

One more direction of research to which Georgian sources may significantly contribute is the study of the sites related to Maximus' imprisonment in West Georgia and his burial place. In spite of the abundant scholarly literature about Maximus available today, the exact place of his last imprisonment and death is still debatable. In this respect, valuable information could be obtained by examining Georgian written sources, as well as local place-names and ethnographic material. The significance of the Georgian material is further enhanced by the (p. 449) fact that Maximus and his two disciples, after being condemned for the refutation of monotheletism, were exiled to Georgia, where three of them found their place of eternal rest.

Lazica (Egrisi in the Georgian sources), the country to which Maximus and the two Anastasii were deported in 662, was a kingdom established in the first century CE in the western part of present-day Georgia, where it succeeded the ancient kingdom of Colchis established in the eight to seventh centuries BCE by Kartvelian tribes. Throughout much of its existence, Egrisi (Lazica) was mainly under the cultural and political influence of Hellenistic Rome and Byzantium, often becoming an arena of confrontation between Byzantium and Iran, as happened during the Lazic War. Under the terms of the treaty of 562 between Byzantium and Iran, Lazica remained under the suzerainty of Byzantium, which abolished royal authority there, and the country was ruled by local governors bearing the title of 'Patricius of Lazica'. At the beginning of the seventh century, the temporary truce between the Romans and Persia collapsed again, but Emperor Heraclius managed to ensure Roman predominance here in Lazica (Muskhelishvili 2003: 268–341).

From the religious perspective, here, as well as in the eastern Georgian kingdom of Iberia, Christianity was declared the official religion in the first half of the fourth century. Beginning from approximately the sixth century, the church of Egrisi (Lazica) was headed by a metropolitan, whose see was in Phasis and who was subordinate to the patriarch of Constantinople. However, according to certain written sources, there existed unity between the churches of East and West Georgia at the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries (Alexidze 1968: 167–75).

This was the situation in Lazica when Maximus and his disciples were exiled there. According to the Greek biographical documents (*Ep.Anast., Hypom.,* Allen–Neil 2002: 134–6, 155, and 163), after arriving in Lazica in 662, Maximus and his two disciples were separated. Maximus was moved to a camp at Schemaris, where he died in August 662. Anastasius the monk was transferred to the fortress of Scotoris, and then further on to Suania; he died in transfer to or at Suania, while Anastasius the Apocrisiarius was transferred from camp to camp until his death in 666 (Allen–Neil 2002: 25).

Toponyms corresponding to these places should therefore be sought in western Georgia, but so far not a single toponym directly corresponding to these places has been attested. In this connection, several conjectures regarding the place of Maximus' imprisonment and burial have been proposed by scholars.

The most widely acknowledged opinion, voiced by Kekelidze (1961: 32–3) and Brilliantov (1918), is that the fortress Schemaris, indicated in Greek sources as the place of Maximus' imprisonment and death, is the Muri Fortress (*Tsikhe-Muri)* situated on the rock of Muri, on the left side of the river Tskhenitskali, near the small township of Tsageri, in the Lechkhumi district of West Georgia. Muri is referred to as one fortress, but in fact it is a complex of three fortresses, standing one next to another. When I visited the fortress in 2005 it looked very much the same as described by participants of the 1914 expedition. The little church, which is believed to be Maximus' burial place and is still called by the local population 'Maximus' Monastery', is situated at the foot of the Muri rock.

(p. 450) Aside from the oral tradition that claims that Maximus was buried in Muri, this supposition is also attested by the twelfth-century Georgian manuscript containing the *Great Synaxarion,* translated by George the Athonite in the eleventh century. Here on the margin of the page corresponding to where the synaxarian *Life of Maximus* is written, there is an anonymous colophon in twelfth-century handwriting stating that 'St Maximus' relics are buried near Tsageri' (Kekelidze 1961: 33).

The Georgian ethnographer, M. Chikovani, has expressed a different opinion concerning the location of the sites

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associated with Maximus' name (1971: 86–9). He presumed that the Greek form Skhimar/Skhemar/Skhimarin is not derived from the place name Tsikhe-Muri, but is a transliteration of the local Svan word 'sgim', meaning a 'sour water', or mineral spring. According to Chikovani, there is such a place in the Lechkhumi region, where a barely accessible fortress is situated and where there is a spring of mineral water in the village of Dekhviri, a few kilometres away from Muri. The presence of the Svan toponym Sgim-Sgimari (from which the Greek 'Skhimar' would be derived) near Dekhviri is possible, due to the vicinity of the Svanety region to Leckhumi. In this village and in its surroundings there still exist places bearing Svan names. Therefore, according to Chikovani, Dekhviri Fortress, built on a mountain plateau, might be the place where Maximus was imprisoned (Dekhviri was a well-known fortified place in feudal times and, supposedly, it was on this elevated place where, prior to Muri, the religious and administrative centre was situated). Chikovani also based his hypothesis on a local folk tradition that Dekhviri was Maximus' permanent residence. In order to link his supposition with the local tradition that Maximus was buried in Muri, Chikovani considers that the fortress in which Maximus was detained and the place of his final burial might not be the same.

The Georgian Liturgical Tradition

With regard to the place of Maximus' burial, valuable information could also be provided by an investigation into Maximus' commemorations in Georgian liturgical collections.

According to the Georgian oral and manuscript tradition, Maximus is buried in Georgia, while the Greek tradition holds that his relics were transferred to Constantinople at a later period. A comparative examination of the commemoration feasts for St. Maximus in Georgian and Greek liturgical collections yields interesting results. Both in the Georgian and Greek liturgical traditions, the main commemoration feasts for Maximus are fixed on 13 August and 21 January. However, the explanation for these feasts differs. According to the Georgian sources, 13 August is the day of Maximus' death, and 21 January is the day when his tongue and right hand were cut off in Constantinople. In the Greek liturgical tradition, 13 August is considered to be the day when Maximus' relics were transferred to Constantinople, while 21 January is the day of his death.

(p. 451) It should be noted that here the Greek tradition contradicts itself. In Greek biographical documents on Maximus, 13 August is the day of his death, while in the liturgical tradition this somehow becomes the memorial day for the transfer of his relics from Lazica to Constantinople, whereas 21 January is considered to be the feast of his dormition.

An analysis of the Greek liturgical sources reveals that the mention of the transfer of Maximus' relics to Constantinople must have appeared at a later date, probably in the eleventh century (Khoperia 2009: 44–6). However, if a transfer had really taken place, it is odd that this fact was not reflected in the Georgian *Synaxarion*, composed by George the Athonite at that period on Mt. Athos, mainly on the basis of the *Typikon* of the Great Church of Constantinople. Based on the results of the examination of Greek and Georgian sources, the Georgian tradition, according to which the transfer never occurred, seems the more plausible. The emergence in the Greek liturgical tradition of the transfer of Maximus' relics to Constantinople may have been associated with the general growth of interest in Maximus during the tenth to eleventh centuries.

Archaeological Evidence

Attempts to determine the place of Maximus' interment by means of archaeological excavations had already begun at the turn of the twentieth century, initiated by scholarly and theological circles of St. Petersburg. In summer 1914 an archaeological expedition headed by Nikoloz Marr worked in the Lechkhumi district, in the vicinity of the Muri fortress, in order to check the conjecture that Maximus was buried there. Unfortunately, the excavations were interrupted after only two weeks due to reasons unknown to us and were never resumed (Kavtaradze 1992: 65–6, 150–7). The First World War and the subsequent occupation of Georgia by communist Russia postponed the archaeological examination of the site for many decades.[10]

Most of the excavation materials from the aborted 1914 expedition were subsequently lost or destroyed. However, personal journals kept by Georgian scholar David Kipshidze, one of the members of the expedition, have survived and contain very interesting material.[11] We learn from Kipshidze's records that the expedition members dug several trenches around the so-called 'Maximus' Church', situated at the foot of the famous Muri fortress, and allegedly built over Maximus' grave. The expedition discovered bricks, tiles, shards of wine jars, coins, and broken

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pieces of columns, as well as the remains of walls and foundation, a font, and remnants of a brick floor. These discoveries led Kipshidze to (p. 452) conclude that the extant church, supposedly dated to the eighteenth century, was built on the site of an older one. Several human skeletons were discovered in the trenches around the church, as well as in a closed tomb; all the bones were re-buried in a fine tomb and the local priest officiated at a burial service (Kavtaradze 1992: 151–6).

Kipshidze's journal has also preserved an interview with a local inhabitant, Sophrom Svanidze, on the recent history of the Church of St. Maximus. As Svanidze stated, at the turn of the twentieth century the Church of St. Maximus was neglected and half-ruined; services were no longer held there. In 1910 Svanidze restored the church at his own cost and asked the bishop to consecrate it, and the latter commissioned the local priest to do so in February 1913 (Chikovani 1971: 79–80). In 1969, when Chikovani visited the place, he reported that Maximus' small church had again fallen into ruin and the adjacent cemetery was no longer in use (1971: 68). At present, due to the efforts of local church authorities, and mostly to Archbishop Stephane, the church has been restored and is functioning.

Georgian Folkloric Tradition Regarding Maximus

An important part of the Georgian tradition regarding Maximus the Confessor is based on the local folklore tradition associated with his name. The rich local ethnographic material related to Maximus can be subdivided into legends about Maximus, and two local feasts.

Legends

The local legends about Maximus constitute a notable example of merging pre-Christian and Christian elements, transforming the image of the saint according to local beliefs and notions. From the records made by various scholars at different times, it is possible to discern more than a dozen variants of the legend of Maximus which, although they complement each other, provide a different interpretation of some of the details. Here I present a brief synopsis of the story as published by Kavtaradze (1992), Kekelidze (1961), Alavidze (1951), and Chikovani (1971).

According to the legends, Maximus led an ascetic life. He was the spiritual instructor of the people, fought against all that was immoral, made friends with the population, and gave them advice. The main place of his residence was the village of Dekhviri; according to one version of the legend, he lived in the hollow of a 1,000 year-old cult linden tree. Maximus was the ruler of the weather. 'However clear the day might be, if he pointed his hand downwards, it would start raining; if [he pointed] upwards, the weather would be fine again' (Chikovani 1971: 75). He also did his best to protect cornfields and hayfields from being ruined, and punished disobedient peasants who grazed their livestock in (p. 453) other people's cornfields and thus ruined their crops. There was only one person in the village who opposed him. Maximus warned this peasant to give up his evil practices and punished him several times, but he still would not obey. The conflict between the wicked peasant and Maximus ended with the murder of the saint. The frightened peasant tried to conceal traces of his crime and buried Maximus, but the corpse would not stay in the grave, and on coming back the murderer found him either sitting or lying on the ground. In accordance with the conventions of legends, this was repeated three times, until a local woman (or the murderer) had a vision: Maximus requested that his corpse be tied to a sledge with a pair of unbroken, not castrated bulls (i.e. sacrificial bulls) harnessed to it, and wherever they stopped, there he had to be buried. The bulls stopped on reaching Muri, where the divine corpse settled down and found his final rest. In one version, the bulls died on reaching their destination; in another, they were killed as a sacrifice and boiled over the fire caused by the burning of the sledge, their meat being distributed among the villagers. After his interment, a church was built at this place dedicated to Maximus.

This legend brings together many miraculous motifs that are partly based on Christian beliefs, but also reflect Georgian and north-Caucasian pre-Christian cults and traditions. Among such elements is the association of Maximus' name with the control of the weather;[12] the motif of repeated burial, which is attested in various forms in Georgian legends and fairytales (Chikovani 1971: 77); the motif of the choice of the grave—the tradition of burying a saint in the place where weary oxen stopped of their own will was fairly widespread in Georgia, where such legends are associated with the construction of many churches (Surguladze 2009: 223–4).

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It has been suggested that the legend of Maximus must have arisen immediately after his death (Chikovani 1971: 90; Surguladze 2009: 221–2). According to his *Commemoration,* by the time of Theodore Spoudaeus' and Theodosius of Gangra's arrival in Lazica in 668, the local population was already convinced of Maximus' sainthood and confirmed with oaths that at night they saw three candles on the saint's grave (*Hypom.*, Allen–Neil 2002: 162). Therefore, it seems that immediately after his death and even before it, Maximus was acknowledged as a holy Father and a wonder-worker by the local population. This is considered by scholars to be the basis of the legends that took shape in Lechkhumi folklore in the 670s CE. Over the following centuries they developed into a very interesting narrative, as Maximus acquired features characteristic of a martyred hero or mortal deity.

The astonishing endurance of the memory of Maximus in the local folk tradition was reported by Geoffrey Carr-Harris, who visited this region in 1979. He recalls that he met a woman of the Chabukiani clan (in local tradition the family name of Maximus' murderer was Chabukiani), who told him that all the women who marry into their clan continue to make an annual visit to the ruins of 'the Church of Maximus' to expiate their eternal guilt (Carr-Harris 2009: 204) .

(p. 454) ### Feasts

There were two different local feasts associated with the name of Maximus in Lechkhumi—a seasonal ritual which was usually held in summer, called *Muroba,* and the annual church feast dedicated to Maximus, known as *Gogashoba*. Information about these feasts is mainly preserved in the records of D. Kipshidze, made in 1914; his respondents were elderly people, most of whom actually witnessed the rituals when they were young.

The name of the first feast, Muroba, is derived from the name of the place Muri, where, according to legend, Maximus was buried. According to oral tradition, after the miraculous burial of Maximus, it began raining very hard, and peasants could not thresh the wheat; then Maximus appeared before his murderer in a vision and taught him how people should pray to stop the rain. Since then, when rainy weather sets in during threshing time, people from nearby villages perform the Muroba ritual.

According to Kipshidze's records (Chikovani 1971: 79–83), six villages situated near Muri chose the most respected elderly men from every household to take part in the procession. The chosen men were barefoot, with twisted twigs around their necks. The priest walked at the head of the procession. They walked towards Maximus' grave, kneeling down in various places and praying. Upon arrival at Maximus' church in Muri, they prayed and wept, entreating Maximus to grant fine weather.

Kipshidze's informants stated that the Muroba feast had not been performed since the 1880s (Chikovani 1971: 81). This ritual, along with the legend, provided the grounds for a few conjectures expressed by scholars, who believe that the feast derives from ancient Georgian beliefs and rituals (Chikovani 1971: 81; Surguladze 2009: 225; Makalatia 1985: 144).

The church feast of Gogashoba, dedicated to Maximus, was celebrated annually on the first Thursday after Easter, in the Church of St. Maximus, and was still being observed in 1914 (Chikovani 1971: 79–80). Women used to go there to pray and donate candles, coins, and food to Maximus. After the restoration and consecration of the church in 1913, the priest offered the liturgy on the first Thursday after Easter. At that time, it was the only day throughout the whole year that the liturgy was offered in the Church of St Maximus (Gardaphkhadze-Kikodze 1995: 48).

Maximus in the Georgian Iconographic Tradition

Finally, Maximus' influence on Georgian mediaeval culture can be discerned in the iconographic tradition as well. There are several representations of Maximus in surviving wall paintings or manuscript illuminations, but no detailed study of these representations has yet been conducted. Based on the scattered data, it should be (p. 455) noted that in all these representations Maximus is depicted among important saints especially respected by the Georgian church, as well as among eminent Georgian monks and historical figures, as in the wall painting of the Georgian monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, and in the Georgian icon of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. All these images reflect the deep reverence in which he is held in Georgia.

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One interesting representation of Maximus was discovered by the archbishop of Lentekhi and Tsagery eparchy (Kalaijishvili, Archbishop Stephane 2005) in the small church of the Archangel Gabriel in the village of Lashtkhveri in Upper Svaneti, the mountain region adjacent to Lechkhumi, which was the place of Maximus' last exile. The church was built at the end of the thirteenth century and was decorated between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Aladashvili–Alibegashvili–Volskaja 1983: 125; Kenia 2010: 234–41). The wall painting preserved in its apse represents Maximus dressed as a bishop among a row of holy bishops, including Basil the Great and John Chrysostom. It is well known that Maximus was never a bishop. Other Georgian representations of him also portray this church Father as a holy monk. In her recent article, Schrade (2009) surveys the reasons for representing him as a bishop among bishops, in a small village church in the mountains of Svaneti. Schrade supposes (2009: 245) that in this representation there might have been a 'shift of meaning': the historical–monastic context of Maximus' life retreated into the background, and the theological importance of Maximus for the Orthodox Church and the great influence of his works in Georgia was emphasized. Thus, according to Schrade, the high esteem of his works in Georgia, perhaps combined with his special cult in nearby Lechkhumi, would have been the reason for representing him in this context, with all the attributes of an '*episkopos*', a guardian of the faith, which once more indicates the significant place Maximus occupied in mediaeval Georgian culture.

Works of Maximus in the Georgian Tradition

Ambigua ad Iohannem (Difficult Passages Addressed to John) (partial)
Ambigua ad Thomam (Difficult Passages Addressed to Thomas) (partial)
Capita XV (Fifteen Chapters)
Capita de caritate (Centuries on Love)
Capita theologica et oeconomica (Chapters on Theology and the Economy)
Disputatio cum Pyrrho (Dispute with Pyrrhus)
Epistulae 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 19
Expositio orationis dominicae (Commentary on the Lord's Prayer)
(p. 456) *Opuscula theologica et polemica (Small Theological and Polemical Works)* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6, 7, 13, 14, and a fragment of *Opusc*. 8
Quaestiones ad Thalassium (Questions Addressed to Thalassius)
Quaestiones et dubia (Questions and Doubtful Passages) (partial)
(?) Scholia on *Corpus Dionysiacum*
(?) *Vita beatae Virginis*

Biographical Documents in Ancient Georgian Translations

Anastasii Apocrisiarii epistola ad Theodosium Gangrensem (Letter of Anastasius Apocrisiarius to Theodosius of Gangra) (partial, and integrated into the translation of the *Vita*)
Disputatio Bizyae cum Theodosio (Dispute at Bizya with Theodosius) (partial, and integrated into the translation of the *Vita Maximi*)
Hypomnesticum (Commemoration) (integrated into the translation of *Description* by John Xiphilinos)
Relatio motionis (Record of the Trial) (partial, and integrated into the translation of the *Vita*)
Vita Maximi (graece) (fifth recension)

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Disputatio cum Pyrrho

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Notes:

([1]) For the manuscripts containing these collections, see Kekelidze 1957: 96–9.

([2]) Preserved in manuscripts A128, A72, and A1064, held at the National Centre of Manuscripts of Georgia.

([3]) For the description of the manuscript, see Devreesse 1954: 78–9.

([4]) For more details, see Kekelidze 1957: 96–9; Chelidze 1996: 388–9. Otkhmezouri's recent studies of the Gelatian translation of *Ambiguorum Liber* reveal that it contains translations of separate sections of *Amb.Th.* and *Amb.Io.* (pers. comm., 10 June 2013).

([5]) The oldest existing manuscript of the Georgian *Corpus Dionysiacum* dates from the eleventh–twelfth centuries. The Georgian version was first published by Enukashvili (1961). As to the scholia, only the Georgian version of the scholia on *Celestial Hierarchy* has been published (Tschumburidze 2001).

([6]) According to Muretov (1913: 2), Bracke (1980: 327–83, 424–9; 1982), and Sansterre (1981), a fourth recension might be one of the oldest recensions of *Vita Maximi*, but van Dieten (1982) and Allen (1985) disagree with this opinion.

([7]) The critical text of the translation was prepared for publication by Manana Dolakidze of the National Centre of Manuscripts of Georgia. She kindly allowed me to work on the text before its publication for which I would like to express my sincere gratitude. The text without *apparatus criticus* is published in *The Calendar of the Georgian Church* (2003: 174–5).

([8]) In Greek sources, John Xiphilinos is known as the author of a collection of fifty-three homilies and of reworked excerpts from the *History of Rome* by Dio Cassius.

([9]) For more details on this translation, see Khoperia 2010, Allen 2015, and Benevich 2015.

([10]) Almost a century later, in 2010, on the initiative of Stephane, archbishop of Lentekhi and the Tsagery eparchy, a new archaeological examination was initiated; however, further study is needed.

([11]) Kipshidze's records are kept in the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, also in the

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Centre of Georgian Manuscripts and in the Literature Museum in Tbilisi. The major part of the diary has been published by Kavtaradze (1992) and Chikovani (1971).

([12]) Chikovani (1971: 76) presumed that Maximus replaced the pre-Christian local deity responsible for controlling the weather.

Lela Khoperia

Lela Khoperia is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Exploration of Georgian Antiquities at St Andrew's Georgian University (Tbilisi, Georgia).

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Maximus' Heritage in Russia and Ukraine

Grigory Benevich

The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor
Edited by Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil

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Abstract and Keywords

Maximus' legacy as it has been studied up to now in Russia and Ukraine is the subject of this chapter. First the author gives an overview of the history of Maximus' translations into Russian. However, the main focus of the chapter is on the study of Maximus' life and works in these two countries. Special attention is paid to the works and publications of some pre-revolutionary Russian scholars—Ivan Orlov, Sergei Epifanovich, Mitrofan Dmitry Muretov, and Alexander Brilliantov. In particular, the author explains that large parts of Epifanovich's dissertation were recently recovered in Kiev by Ukrainian scholars. Study of Maximus' legacy before the Russian Revolution is treated not only as a part of patristic studies in Russia, but also as a contributing factor in the development of Russian thought and even modern church history.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, Kiev, patristics, translations

Grigory Benevich

Grigory Benevich is a senior researcher and head of department in the Russian Christian Academy for the Humanities (St. Petersburg).

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Maximus the Confessor's Influence and Reception in Byzantine and Modern Orthodoxy

Andrew Louth

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Abstract and Keywords

The author of this chapter examines the reception of Maximus in the Orthodox world from Maximus' death to the present day. The most immediate reception of Maximus is to be found in John Damascene. It is uneven and complex: the Damascene inherited Maximus' respect for Nemesius of Emesa, using him for the same themes but with independent access; important aspects of Maximus' thought, for example, the doctrine of *logoi*, were overlooked. Photius knew many of Maximus' works, but not, oddly, the early *Ambigua*. Thereafter Maximus' influence is difficult to trace. Maximus was much quoted in the hesychast controversy, though it is not clear how extensively he was understood. Following this, there is very little trace of Maximus until the publication of the *Philokalia* in 1782, in which he is one of the authors most drawn on, though to a large extent in a 'digested' form.

Keywords: John Damascene, Nemesius of Emesa, Photius, hesychast controversy

CONDEMNED and mutilated, Maximus the Confessor was exiled to Lazica in Georgia together with his two disciples, Anastasius, his long-term disciple from 618, and Anastasius, the papal apocrisiarius, who had thrown in his lot with the Confessor sometime during the legal process. There he soon died, on 13 August 662, his disciples not long surviving him. A cult of Maximus began almost immediately; recently, what appear to be the relics of the three saints have been discovered in Georgia, in confirmation of a long tradition that Maximus' relics were never translated to Constantinople as the Greek tradition maintains, but remained in Georgia at the Monastery of St. Maximus in Tsageri (Khoperia 2009: 44–6, written before the rediscovery of the relics).

During Maximus' lifetime, the Mediterranean saw political changes that altered the political and cultural landscape for ever. Maximus was born in the Byzantine Empire that a few decades earlier, under Emperor Justinian, had regained something of its unity as a Mediterranean empire; when he died, the eastern provinces of the empire (Syria, Palestine, and Egypt) had fallen to Islam, and had become part of the Umayyad Empire, while the North African provinces would become part of the Islamic Empire by the end of the century, with much of Spain (Al-Andalus) falling to Islam by 711 (see Allen and Kaegi 2015). The world in which Maximus had begun his life was still recognizable as the Roman Empire; in the last decades of his life this began to fragment. The world in which Maximus would be received was one made up of increasingly distinct, if not antagonistic, political regions.

The public account of Maximus' life is dominated by his struggle for Orthodoxy against the imperial christological nostrums, intended to heal the divisions in the (p. 501) church, caused by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, that weakened the empire in the face of emergent Islam. What is mostly reflected in his writings is, rather, the inner life of the monk that characterized most of his adult years. Certainly there are several works directed against christological heresy, but the bulk of his works are monastic, representing the summation of the Greek intellectual and ascetic tradition, firmly rejecting Origenism, but finding his own answers to the metaphysical questions Origen and those inspired by him had grappled with, and thus drawing together the several threads of the Greek patristic

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tradition—ascetic, philosophical, doctrinal, liturgical—into a synthesis, with cosmic entailments and insights for the personal life of prayer and asceticism, as well as for the life of the church.

Maximus' physical presence was felt in many areas of the Mediterranean—in Constantinople, the islands of Crete and Cyprus, North Africa, Rome, Palestine (if not directly, as the Syriac *Life* claims, then through Sophronius, and the monasteries of the Judaean desert, which had become the 'the very hearth of Chalcedonianism', in Flusin's phrase (Flusin 1992: ii.59) and Georgia. They all felt his intellectual presence, too.

For his influence, let us start nearest the source, as it were, with Georgia and Palestine. After Maximus died in Georgia, Anastasius the apocrisiarius records in a letter that there appeared a miracle of 'three shining lamps illuminat[ing] the holy tomb of that holy martyr Maximus' (Allen–Neil 2002: 136–7). Maximus continued to be venerated in Georgia: many of his works were translated into Georgian, legends and folkloric customs grew up around the saint, his influence can be detected on the great Georgian poet, Shota Rustaveli, and there is a long-standing iconographical tradition of the saint (see Mgaloblishvili–Khoperia 2009 and Khoperia 2015).

Maximus (and Martin) were vindicated at the Sixth Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople in 680–1; nonetheless, no mention was made of them at the council, their opposition to the churchmen and theologians of the reigning city maybe too raw a memory, not to mention the need to spare the reputation of the imperial family. Barely a decade earlier, during the pontificate of Adeodatus II, the *Commemoration (Hypom.)*, one of a dossier of works detailing the trials and last days of the Confessor, found its way to Rome, stimulating a revival of interest in the witness to Orthodoxy of the martyrs Martin and Maximus (Kelly 1986: 76).

The real beginnings of Maximus' theological reception are to be found in Palestine, where commitment to the conciliar Orthodoxy of the empire had deep roots. John of Damascus betrays the influence of Maximus in several ways. It is most obvious in his Christology, where he follows Maximus closely and perhaps even develops his response to monothelitism (Louth 2002: 157–72). There is further evidence of the influence of the Confessor: Maximus seems to have been the first Father to value the work of Nemesius of Emesa, whose ideas, especially on providence, he borrows; John of Damascus is indebted to precisely the same passages, though he seems to have taken them from Nemesius' text itself, rather than from the Confessor. The Damascene also shares Maximus' interest in the cosmos; he does not, however, take up his doctrine of the *logoi* (λόγοι), the structural principles of Creation. Under Islam, forms of Christianity that did not conform to imperial Orthodoxy continued to flourish, (p. 502) no longer threatened by the political powers (monophysitism, the monothelitism of the Maronites, especially): the extent to which these non-conformists identified conciliar Orthodoxy with the teaching of Maximus is manifest in their dubbing them 'Maximians' (Palmer 1993: 26).

It is in the ninth century that we are first able to gauge something of the reception of Maximus the Confessor (outside Georgia): in the West, with Eriugena, who became a luminary in the Carolingian court circles, and Anastasius the Librarian in Rome, and in the East, with Photius, patriarch of Constantinople (857–67, 877–86). The story of Eriugena and Anastasius' reception of the Confessor is treated elsewhere (Kavanagh 2015).

It is with the learned patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, that we find the first comprehensive knowledge of the Confessor in the Byzantine Empire. In his *Myriobiblon* ('thousand books'), or *Bibliotheca* ('library'), Photius reviews several of Maximus' works: *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* (codex 192A); a collection of twenty-seven letters, a somewhat different collection from the forty-five letters edited by Combefis (1648) and found in Migne (PG 91. 364–649) (codex 192B); the tract *On the Ascetic Life* and the *Centuries on Love* (codex 193); a letter to George the prefect, which may be Combefis' *Letter* 1, *Two Centuries on Theology and the Incarnation, Letters* 13, 15, and 19 (in Combefis' enumeration), and two letters to Thomas, the first of which consists of *Ambigua Addressed to Thomas* (*Amb.Th.* 1–5, or the later *Amb.*), the second being another letter (the 'second'), unknown to Combefis (codex 194); a letter to Marianus (which seems to be the same as *Opusc.* 1) and the *DP* (codex 195). The only major omissions from this list are the earlier *Amb.Io.*, most of the *Opusc.*, and a few smaller works, such as the *Exposition of Ps. 59, On the Lord's Prayer,* and his *Mystagogy*.

It is striking that while Eriugena knew only the *Amb.Io.*, Photius knew only the *Amb.Th.,* even though Maximus himself seems to have known an edition of the *Amb.*, that combines the later *Amb.Th.* and the earlier *Amb.Io.*(cf. *Opusc.* 1. 33A10, which refers to *Amb.Io.* 2 as *Amb.Io.* 7); as late as the tenth/eleventh century, Euthymius the Georgian seems to have known only the *Amb.Io.* (Khoperia 2009: 28). Photius complains about Maximus' style, finding it repetitive, ill-constructed, and obscure, though 'his piety and the purity and sincerity of his longing for

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Christ shines forth' (Henry 1962: 80–1).

Photius then knew a great deal of the Maximian *corpus*. How much did it influence his own theological reflection? We can see this influence in two ways, both in the way he practises theology and in the way he formulates it. The most important of Maximus' works take the form of response to questions about difficult passages (hence the title *Ambigua* for a treatise that deals with difficulties found mostly in the works of Gregory the Theologian; the *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* are concerned with difficulties in the scriptures). This became a popular genre in Byzantine theology, producing a meditative, ruminative approach to theology, something that could feed the life of the monk. Photius' *Amphilochia* stand in this tradition (though more scholarly than monastic). In questions of Christology, Photius shows a firm grasp of the intricacies of Maximus' arguments over nature, person, and will (Louth 2006).

(p. 503) Photius seems to have known Maximus' works in several discrete volumes; it is not until the tenth century that the so-called Constantinopolitan edition of his works was assembled which is the basis of all subsequent manuscripts of the works of the Confessor; this edition is directly related to the endeavours of Euthymius, of the Georgian monastery of Iviron on Mt. Athos, which included the first translation of many of the Confessor's works into Georgian (Khoperia 2009: 27–30). The Constantinopolitan edition led to the diffusion of Maximus' works in the form of excerpts, thus making the difficult treatises of the Confessor more accessible. The most important of these collections of excerpts is the anthology of 500 chapters, beginning with a genuine treatise of fifteen chapters, but drawn mostly (414 chapters) from the *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* (with some excerpts from *Amb.Io., Epp.*, and the scholia to the *Corpus Areopagiticum*), called *Five Centuries of Various Chapters on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice* (PG 90. 1177–1392)—'centuries' being a long established monastic genre, of which the Confessor himself had made use.[1] There are also nearly 100 excerpts from Maximus included in the *Synagogi*, compiled by Paul, the eleventh-century founder of the Evergetis Monastery (Wortley 1994: 314).

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider the *Five Centuries* and the use of Maximus in the *Synagogi*, as these are the best indication we have of how the Confessor was read in monastic circles in the later Byzantine Empire and under the Ottomans. The *Five Centuries* is, we have seen, largely compiled from the *Questions Addressed to Thalassius*. In fact, the passages from this work included in the *Five Centuries* are not simply the words of Maximus himself, for many of them are drawn from the scholia that are appended to most of the *Questions Addressed to Thalassius.* These scholia summarize the main points of the question, presumably for the benefit of those who would struggle with the often tortuous thought of the Confessor. The *Five Centuries* take this process a stage further: the passages included in the paragraphs, which are generally short, epitomize the thought of the Confessor, and are arranged in a way that would be suitable for monastic meditative reading. Modern scholarship has ignored the *Five Centuries*, after establishing that it is an anthology of Maximian passages, and identifying the sources of these passages. It was, however, clearly put together with some care, and indeed is modelled on the authentic centuries of the Confessor. So, for example, like both the *Two Centuries on Theology and the Incarnation*, it begins with a series of chapters, summarizing the doctrine of the Trinity, the divine economy, and its implications for humankind (*Five Centuries* 1. 1–15); this section has not been identified with any other of the Confessor's works, and it is likely that it is a brief treatise by Maximus himself. It is manifest from the selection and structure of the Centuries that the *Q.Thal.* has been turned, from a series of largely exegetical questions, often of considerable difficulty, into a structured collection on the ascetic life of the monk and the nature and purpose of prayer, that is, deification, though in doing this the work takes its cue from Maximus himself, who in his response to Thalassius' questions goes way beyond the exegetical point in (p. 504) hand. This process had already begun in the scholia, which often summarize particular points made by the Confessor, rather than helping readers to understand his hermeneutic method.

Something similar is true of the use of Maximus in the *Synagogi* (or *Evergetinus*). This work, in four books, consists of a series of questions about the monastic life, which are responded to by a series of passages from ascetic Fathers and the *Lives* of the saints. The passages selected from Maximus, like those selected from the other Fathers, are subordinated to the purpose of the *Synagogi*, which is the nature of the monastic life and how to pursue it. In both these cases—the *Five Centuries* and the *Synagogi*—Maximus is presented as the ascetic master, and particularly as the teacher of the nature of love.

Alongside this popular dissemination of Maximus in predominantly monastic circles, the Confessor was read and appreciated in court circles, famously by the empress Irene Doukaina, as related by her daughter Anna Comnena

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in the *Alexiad* (Sewter 1969: 178–9). This interest in court circles (which included, too, Isaac Sebastocrator), as well as in wealthy monastic circles, accounts for some of the *de luxe* manuscripts of the Confessor from this period. Maximus was also read in lay circles, where the tradition of reflective theology more or less inaugurated by him and found, as we have seen, in Photius continued. Maximus features frequently in the theological works of Michael Psellus, who draws, as one might expect, on *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* and the *Ambigua*, but seems also to have been fond of Maximus' brief exposition of Psalm 59. He typically refers to Maximus as *philosophos*, which reveals where his true interests lie, for in Psellus' works we find the rediscovery in Byzantine thought of the whole philosophical tradition of pagan Greece, especially the revival of pagan ideas in late neo-Platonists such as Proclus. It has been argued that we can see two divergent ways of receiving the Confessor in the eleventh century, one tradition represented by Psellus, the other by the emperor Alexius I's older brother, Isaac Sebastocrator. The former led to the condemnation of Psellus' disciple, John Italus, at a trial presided over by Isaac Sebastocrator. Psellus drew on Maximus, in whom one finds a serious reception of neo-Platonic ideas, but followed the source of Maximus' ideas rather than the way Maximus incorporated these ideas into a genuinely Christian metaphysic; Isaac, on the other hand, kept more closely to Maximus, using his doctrine of the principles, or *logoi*, of Creation to Christianize Proclus' universe. The condemnation of Italus, and the addition of anathemas to the *Synodicon of Orthodoxy*, forbidding any use of the metaphysical speculation of Plato and the Platonists, had the net effect of preventing the flourishing of even Isaac's own Maximian brand of neo-Platonism (Simonopetrites 2013: 36–44; on Psellus see also Duffy 1995, 2002).

We can be sure, from the existence of the *Five Centuries* and the *Synagogi*, that Maximus continued to be read in monastic circles throughout the Byzantine Middle Ages. This, however, makes it very difficult to be clear about how much he himself was read; for example, in the writings of Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022) there are many parallels with the theology of the Confessor, but it is not possible to be certain how much Symeon was indebted to Maximus directly. Symeon's disciple, Nicetas Stithatus (for such he claimed to be), similarly seems to make little use of the Confessor. He is (p. 505) aware of his teaching, however, and makes several references to the λόγοι of Creation—typically he has λόγοι τῶν ὄντων—but he never seems to quote from the Confessor.

Nevertheless, it is not surprising that Maximus emerges in the controversies of the fourteenth century concerning hesychasm, which was at least as much a controversy among the monks of Mt. Athos as a clash between monastic piety and (secular) humanism, as it is often interpreted. He is quoted very generally, on both sides: Gregory Palamas, in his *Triads*, quotes largely from *Amb.Io.*, but also from *Questions Addressed to Thalassius* and *Two Centuries on Theology and the Incarnation*, with a few citations from elsewhere (of the twenty-five clear citations from *Amb.*, fifteen are from *Amb*. 10, perhaps not surprisingly as much of it is a meditation of the Transfiguration, a central topic of discussion in the hesychast controversy). One of his principal opponents, Gregory Akindynos (probably himself an Athonite monk: Nadal Cañellas 2006: 28–103) cites Maximus very frequently, more than any other Father save Gregory the Theologian and Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite, drawing mostly on Maximus' various *Centuries*, the *Ambigua* (almost all from *Amb.Io.* 10), and *Questions Addressed to Thalassius*. As is the case with polemical literature, Maximus can hardly be said to shape the argument; rather he is appealed to as remarks of his seem to support, or cause embarrassment to, the warring antagonists. A good deal is made of his remark in *Amb.Io.* 10 (PG 91. 1165D) that in the Transfiguration he accepted 'out of his immeasurable love for humankind to become the type and symbol of himself, … and through the manifestation of himself to lead to himself in his complete and secret hiddenness the whole Creation'. For the opponents of the hesychasts, the word 'symbol' was held to indicate that the light of the Transfiguration was symbolic and therefore created; to which the Orthodox responded that being a 'symbol of himself' implied a closer relationship between symbol and the one symbolized, such that the light itself must be regarded as uncreated, and was, indeed, a 'natural symbol', sharing the nature of what it symbolized. This debate continued over the rest of the century, being treated most fully by Gregory's thoroughly Aristotelian supporter, Theophanes III of Nicaea (Simonopetrites 2013: 48–51). Maximus is also cited by the hesychasts in defence of a realistic doctrine of *theosis*, or deification, especially his remark in *Q.Thal*. 22 (repeated in *Amb.Io.* 41, PG 91. 1308B) that 'the man divinized by grace will be everything that God is, apart from identity of substance' (cited, e.g. by Palamas, *Capita CL* 111; Sinkewicz 1988: 211). It is surprising (or maybe not, given the nature of polemic) that Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi* of Creation is rarely encountered.

Maximus seems to have been not much known in the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation/Counter Reformation that ensued. The first edition of his works did not appear until 1675, in an incomplete edition by Francois Combefis (a third volume that would have completed the edition was ready by the time he died in 1679,

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but never published); the missing texts, most importantly the *Ambigua*, were only published by F. Oehler in 1867. In the Greek East, now under the Ottoman yoke, Maximus continued to be read in monastic circles, something confirmed by his being the writer most fully represented in the Athonite anthology of ascetic texts, the *Philokalia*, compiled by Macarius of Corinth and Nicodemus the Athonite (1782; repr. 1957). This work includes the *Four Centuries on Love*, the *Two Centuries on Theology and the Incarnation*, and the (p. 506) *Five Centuries on Diverse Chapters*, presented as a continuation of the *Two Centuries*, with, finally, *On the Lord's Prayer*. The selection leans strongly towards the ascetic side of the Confessor's teaching, though there are many demanding passages on theology throughout these works; it is difficult to separate theology and spirituality in Maximus. The *Philokalia* was destined to have a profound influence on Orthodox theology and spirituality, which contributed to a wider reception of the theology of Maximus (though this influence is mitigated by the fact that the Slavonic translation omitted Maximus' treatises altogether, while the Russian translation included only a selection (see Conticello–Conticello 2002: 1006–7). In the nineteenth century, Maximus benefited from the extensive programme of translation of patristic texts, fostered by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow; by the end of the century Russian theologians had easy access to a vast range of patristic texts in Russian translation, including those of the Confessor.

Modern scholarship on Maximus the Confessor began in the Slav world with S. L. Epifanovich's works in 1915 and 1917. This latter published thirty-seven texts hitherto unknown, or known only partially (not all of which have turned out to be genuine). Before this, however, Maximus was by no means unknown to Russian theologians (see Benevich 2015): Vladimir Solovjev had read him; Pavel Florensky cites him several times in his monumental *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, at one point making him a key witness to his controversial ideas on friendship (Florensky 1997: 312); Sergii Bulgakov finds in Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi* the essentials of his sophiology (Bulgakov 2008: 126 n.) and draws on him for his middle way between filioquism and monopatrism in the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit, a notion he owed to the Russian church historian, Bolotov (Bulgakov 2004: 91–2); in the lectures that he gave at the newly established Institut St-Serge in Paris, Georges Florovsky gives a well-rounded account of the theology of the Confessor (Florovsky 1987: 208–53). However, by this time, the lodestar of Orthodox theology was increasingly becoming Gregory Palamas. Nevertheless, for all the importance attached to Palamas, it is Maximus the Confessor whom Vladimir Lossky cites more than any of the other Greek Fathers (Lossky 1997).

It is impossible to give an account of the influence and reception of Maximus the Confessor in modern Orthodoxy without referring to the revival of Maximian scholarship in the West; without the work of western scholars in expounding, and then publishing in critical editions, his works, the revival of Maximus in the Orthodox world would have been very different. Epifanovich's work was soon to be followed by studies of the Confessor among western scholars (mostly Roman Catholic), some of whom concentrated on his role in the history of dogma, notably the immensely learned Martin Jugie in his *Theologia dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium ab Ecclesia Catholica Dissidentium* (Jugie 1926–35), who draws on the whole range of Maximus' dogmatic theology, and Venance Grumel and Robert Devreesse, who published articles clarifying aspects of the Confessor's life and his role in the monothelite controversy, with Devreesse publishing the lost conclusion of a letter protesting to the emperor Heraclius about the forced baptism of Jews in 632 (a letter already published by Epifanovich) (Devreesse 1937). Attention began to be paid to Maximus' teaching on the spiritual life, with an important (though reductive) article by M. Viller on Evagrius as the source of Maximus' (p. 507) spirituality (Viller 1930). More important were the articles by the Russian émigrée, living in Paris, Myrrha Lot-Borodine—a series on deification in the Greek Fathers (Lot-Borodine 1932–33), which drew heavily on Maximus, and her French translation of his *Mystagogy* (Lot-Borodine 1936–38): these articles introduced the spirit of Greek theology, especially that of Maximus, to the West, and made a strong impression on scholars, such as the future Cardinal, Jean Daniélou (Lot-Borodine 1970: 9–18).

The real beginnings of attention to Maximus as a theologian of towering stature are to be found in the early works of the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, then a Jesuit. His great work, *Kosmische Liturgie, Maximus der Bekenner. Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbild* (von Balthasar 1961), presented Maximus as a theologian who drew together all the strands of Greek theology—ascetic, doctrinal, metaphysical, and liturgical—into an imposing synthesis; it was, however, in von Balthasar's view, unstable, with little posterity in the East, Maximus' legacy really being found in the theology of the West. Maximus is presented as a figure belonging to both eastern and western Christianity. Soon figures who were going to swell the ranks of Maximian scholars began to emerge: people such as I.-H. Dalmais and Irénée Hausherr (some of whose articles on Maximus appear under the pseudonym of I. Lemaître), whose most important early treatments of the Confessor are Dalmais' short but

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important article on the doctrine of the *logoi* (Dalmais 1952), and Hausherr's account of Maximus' doctrine of love (Hausherr 1952). Maximus figured prominently in Vasilios Tatakis' remarkable but strangely neglected *La Philosophie byzantine* (Tatakis 1949).

The next major figure in the realm of Maximian scholarship was to be the Benedictine monk, Polycarp Sherwood, whose two volumes provided an attempt to date the works of the Confessor which is only now revised (Sherwood 1952; see Jankowiak–Booth 2015), and a major study of the *Amb.Io.* (Sherwood 1955b), which overthrew von Balthasar's theory that Maximus himself had been an Origenist and reacted against it, and maintained that in the earlier *Amb.* we find 'a refutation of Origenism … with a full understanding and will to retain what is good in the Alexandrian's doctrine—a refutation perhaps unique in Greek patristic literature' (Sherwood 1952: 3). Another important article of the 1950s explored the Aristotelian roots of Maximus' analysis of the human will (Gauthier 1954).

The 1960s saw an enormous expansion of works on or about the Confessor; it is, however, dominated by three major works: the second edition of von Balthasar's *Kosmische Liturgie* (von Balthasar 1961); Lars Thunberg's monumental work, *Microcosm and Mediator* (Thunberg 1995); and Walther Völker's major study of Maximus' spiritual theology (Völker 1965). Von Balthasar's book is a complete revision of the original: his theory about Maximus' Origenist stage is abandoned and the Confessor presented, not just as embracing both eastern and western Christendom, but rather as one who spans East and West in a global sense (Louth 1997). The book by the Swedish Lutheran, Thunberg, complements von Balthasar's work and demonstrates in immense detail the way in which the Confessor sees the human person as standing at the centre of the cosmos, intended to hold together the oppositions of a world that partakes of multiplicity. Maximus is discerned as a theologian with much to say to a world that is experiencing (p. 508) fragmentation and ecological disaster. Völker's work was one in a series of major studies of the spirituality of the spiritual giants of the Greek church, from Clement of Alexandria to Nicolas Kavasilas; in it he explored in depth the Confessor's understanding of the spiritual life.

By the mid-1960s, scholarship of Maximus was becoming something of an industry. The reception of Maximus had shifted from the Confessor, the witness to Chalcedonian Christology, to the monk, the spiritual theologian who, in the line of 'Origenism', set his ascetical theology against a metaphysical and cosmic background, his metaphysics being informed by what a number of scholars came to call his 'Chalcedonian logic'.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there appeared a series of works, published in the series Théologie historique, by a group of French-speaking scholars, all with an introduction by M. J. Le Guillou, their mentor, that presented Maximus very much as a precursor of Thomas Aquinas (Le Guillou and most of his disciples were Dominicans), and finding in him an approach to theology that could bring about union between the Orthodox East and the Catholic West.[2] Articles by Garrigues explored the Confessor's mediating position on the *Filioque* (Garrigues 1975) and on the Roman primacy (Garrigues 1976b). Pope John Paul II's conciliatory allocution on the *Filioque*, delivered in Rome in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch on 29 June 1995, 'The Greek and Latin Traditions concerning the Procession of the Holy Spirit', adopted some of Garrigues' arguments.

Since the 1990s, Orthodox scholarship has begun to catch up, notably with the work of Jean-Claude Larchet (Larchet 1996, and many other works), Loudovikos (1992), Bathrellos (2004), Törönen (2007), and Tollefsen (2008). What is striking about these Orthodox contributions to Maximian scholarship is that, without any detriment to their scholarly rigour, these treatises are also works of engaged theology (on which see more will be said in this chapter).

Twentieth-century western scholarship on Maximus changed the western perception on the Confessor and, it could be argued, presented a figure more in tune with the way the saint had been received in the Orthodox East (see Lollar 2015). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Maximus the Confessor had been known, if at all, as the opponent of the christological heresies of monoenergism and monothelitism. In von Harnack's *Dogmengeschichte*, he is mentioned a handful of times in relation to the monothelite controversy, which von Harnack regarded as predominantly political. Tixeront gives more of a place to Maximus, devoting the conclusion of his chapter on 'monothélisme' to an exposition of his Christology: he knows him as 'auteur mystique' as well as 'théologien', but discusses nothing else than his Christology (Tixeront 1922: 188–92). The East reveres Maximus as a martyr for Orthodoxy (hence his title, 'the Confessor'), but it is evident from the account of his reception, as we have seen, that he has been received in the East first and foremost as a spiritual and ascetic theologian, as well as one whose metaphysical vision set the Christian life and the Christian liturgy in a cosmic context. It is this side of the Confessor

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that twentieth-century western scholarship revealed, as is suggested by (p. 509) the very titles of the two principal works on Maximus—*Cosmic Liturgy* (von Balthasar 1961, 2003) and *Microcosm and Mediator* (Thunberg 1995). There have been articles on his role in the monothelite controversy, but some of these, notably Gauthier's analysis of the Confessor's understanding of the human process of willing, are less concerned with the bearing of this on the monothelite controversy (the context in which Maximus mostly developed these ideas) than with their contribution to our understanding of the anthropology and psychology of the Confessor. Most of the western scholarship in the twentieth century has focussed on his spiritual theology, and the way in which his theological vision draws together the dogmatic theology of the Cappadocian Fathers and Cyril of Alexandria, the cosmic vision of the author of the *Corpus Areopagiticum*, which includes reflection on the Eucharistic liturgy, and the understanding of what it is to be human gained by the experience of the Byzantine ascetics—the desert Fathers and their successors. Furthermore, it is interesting that little of this western scholarship has been purely a matter of scholarship: many of the western scholars who have worked on Maximus have found in his thought a perspective from which some sort of common ground shared by western and eastern theology can be discerned. There are even particular theological issues, of great importance, in which Maximus has been seen as a reconciling figure: notably the doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Spirit (the *Filioque*) and the question of papal primacy. Of perhaps more fundamental significance is Antoine Lévy's (2006) exploration of the relationship between uncreated and created in Maximus and Aquinas as providing a background for understanding the way in which the Palamite controversy has been regarded as epitomizing the theological division between East and West. In his own lifetime, Maximus was a figure from the East who supported the pope and the West; this is an image in which many have found inspiration.

The influence and reception of the Confessor in modern Orthodoxy is bound up with the renewed interest in Maximus in western theological and academic circles; it could be regarded as a special case of the way in which the movement of *Ressourcement* has both opened the eyes of the West to the East and given back to the East some of the riches of her own tradition. We have already referred to Myrrha Lot-Borodine and Vladimir Lossky who were writing in Paris during the formative years of the theologians of Catholic *Ressourcement*. Though he was only briefly in Paris, French Catholic thought and culture had a profound effect on Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, who is, perhaps, the most important Orthodox theologian in whom one can see the influence of Maximus the Confessor. Beginning in the 1940s in Romania, Fr. Stăniloae translated virtually the whole of the Maximian corpus, partly for his Romanian *Philokalia* (in which the selections from Maximus appeared in their full form, the *Five Centuries* being replaced by a complete translation of *Q.Thal.*), but also independently (the *Amb.*, for instance). This work of engagement with the thought of the Confessor is manifest in his own works of theology, notably his *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (in English *The Experience of God*), where the theological insights of the Confessor powerfully inform his own dogmatic theology (Stăniloae 1996–97).

As already suggested *Cosmic Liturgy, Microcosm and Mediator* point accurately to what twentieth-century western theology found in Maximus; they also serve as good (p. 510) pointers to the themes where Stăniloae's own theological reflection drew most immediately on Maximus. Fundamental to his understanding of the created order is the way in which the human was created as a 'little cosmos', a *microcosm*, in which the whole created cosmos is reflected; but as well as summing up the cosmos in himself, the human is also created in the image of God, and so acts as mediator between God and the cosmos. Indeed, Stăniloae radicalizes patristic thought on the human being as microcosm, by suggesting that more truly one should see the cosmos as a 'great human' (*makranthropos*), for, whereas the cosmos is simply many times physically bigger, the human, by virtue of the capacity to understand, part of the meaning of being in the image of God, comprehends the cosmos, enfolds it in his/her understanding. This Pascalian insight is developed by Stăniloae from the thought of the Confessor. Stăniloae also draws on Maximus' doctrine of the *logoi* of Creation—the many *logoi* contained in the one *Logos* of God, through whom the cosmos came into being—and develops an understanding of the cosmos as expressive of God's loving purpose—as instinct, as it were, with the divine presence. On this basis, he explores an understanding of the cosmos alive to the ecological issues that became more and more pressing as the twentieth century drew to a close. Concern for the environment has become one of the key themes of the pontificate of Patriarch Bartholomew: several conferences have been summoned under his initiative; the Orthodox theological voice on these matters frequently draws on the theology of Maximus the Confessor (see, from many examples, Ware 1997; Bartholomew 2012; Chryssavgis–Foltz 2013).

A central theme in Maximus' metaphysics is the distinction he draws between λόγος τῆς οὐσίας and τρόπος τῆς

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ὑπάρξεως—'principle of being' and 'mode of existence'. The idea of principles of being gives Maximus a way of understanding the created order as a structural unity, expressed in the λόγοι, which are all summed up in the one *Logos* of God, through whom the cosmos was created: the structured unity of the cosmos thus expresses God's will and purpose for the universe. Mode of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως) entered Christian vocabulary through the Cappadocian Fathers who used the term for the distinguishing characteristics of the three Persons, or hypostaseis (ὑπόστασεις), of the Trinity: it meant something like 'mode of origin', and referred to unbegottenness, being begotten, and proceeding. The distinction between 'principle' (λόγος) and 'mode' (τρόπος) reflects the distinction between being (οὐσία) and person (ὑπόστασις), introduced into trinitarian theology by Basil the Great. Maximus applies the distinction, which originated in trinitarian theology, to the metaphysics of Creation, where he uses it to distinguish between God's intention for the cosmos and for each individual creature and the way in which the creature exists. In the case of the non-rational Creation, principle and mode coincide; the mode expresses the principle of being. In the case of rational beings, mode can depart from principle: the mode of existence of the creature, because of the possession of rational freedom, need no longer express the principle of being, intended by the Creator. The principle of being is not destroyed, it is rather that the mode of existence of the creature—the way it lives its life—no longer expresses its principle of being; (p. 511) one's life, as it were, runs against the grain of one's being. It is in this way that Maximus explains the nature of the Fall of humankind. Maximus therefore develops an ontology in which there is a distinction (actual in the case of humankind) between the deep structures of the cosmos and the way in which these are expressed: there is a distinction between being or essence and existence.

Zizioulas claims that the distinction between being (*ousia*) and hypostasis in the Cappadocian Fathers contains the doctrine of personhood that he maintains is the distinctive contribution of Christian thought to metaphysical thinking. Nevertheless, in drawing out the significance of personhood contained in the use of hypostasis, he makes a good deal of use of Maximus' development of Cappadocian reflection, in particular the distinction between essence and existence implied by the distinction between principle of being and mode of existence. This distinction Zizoulas interprets in a way that owes a good deal to twentieth-century existentialism. There is room for doubt as to whether Zizioulas is not reading modern categories back into ancient thinkers, but Maximus' distinction between principle of being (λόγος τῆς οὐσίας) and mode of existence (τρόπος τῆς ὑπάρξεως), as explained above, suggests the ontological distinction on which Zizioulas lays such emphasis. There is good deal of discussion, not least among Maximus scholars, on how far Zizioulas' notions of personhood can be traced back to the Fathers, not least Maximus, but there is no doubt that Maximus has proved an inspiration for the understanding of personhood of modern Orthodox theology, which extends well beyond the works of Zizioulas.[3] Much the same is true in the case of Christos Yannaras, though it is clearer what use he makes of the Confessor. The early works of Yannaras develop an understanding of personhood in close dependence on Heidegger, a notion of personhood in many ways similar to what we find in Zizioulas:[4] 'person' is opposed to nature, or essence, and exists, as the person stands out from his own nature and finds the reality of personhood in relationships with others, characterized first of all by *eros*, which is essentially ecstatic. The later versions of *Person and Eros* develop the notion of personhood by drawing extensively on Maximus. Given that this extensive use of Maximus belongs to the later strata of the book, it is perhaps fairer to say that Yannaras found in the works of the Confessor not so much inspiration, as a sanction.

The cosmic dimension in Maximus' thought leads theological reflection to focus on the arc from Creation to deification, and sees the cosmic as involved in the drama of redemption, and not just its backdrop, a cosmic dimension manifest in an understanding of the human as 'microcosm and mediator', in virtue of its Creation in the image of God, and celebrated in the Eucharistic liturgy: this is perhaps the most central way in which the rediscovery of Maximus has influenced modern Orthodox theology.

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Notes:

([1]) For excerpts from *Q. Thal.* incorporated in the *Centuries*, see Laga–Steel 1980: lxxvi–lxxix; Laga–Steel 1990:

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xlv–xlvii. Cf. Van Deun 2015.

([2]) Riou 1973; Garrigues 1976a; Léthel 1979; Piret 1983; belonging to the same group was C. von Schönborn, with a book on Maximus' mentor, Sophronius of Jerusalem (von Schönborn 1972).

([3]) For the most extensive critique of Zizioulas, see Larchet 2011, to whom Zizioulas has responded (Zizioulas 2013).

([4]) Though the early works of Yannaras (1967 and 1970), later published in a revised form as *Person and Eros* (Yannaras 1987), were published long before Zizioulas 1985.

Andrew Louth

Andrew Louth is Professor Emeritus of Patristic and Byzantine theology at the University of Durham and a visiting professor at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.

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The Theology of the Will

Ian A. McFarland

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Against the monothelite perspective, Maximus maintained that the will, as a constitutive feature of human nature, was the foundation of life rooted in God, rather than a source of ontological instability that threatened to turn us away from God. Specifically, he argued that a desire could be both natural *and* a matter of free will: just as God's goodness is both unalterable and nevertheless the highest expression of divine freedom, so human beings' natural appetites may and should be lived out freely, as matters of self-conscious agency rather than mindless instinct. At the same time, Maximus did not restrict the exercise of the will to following natural desires. In stark contrast to libertarian views, freedom of the will for Maximus is an expression *of* human nature rather than a power *over* it that puts us in conflict both with our natures and with the God who created them.

Keywords: monothelitism, will, human nature, free will, desire, freedom, agency

THERE are few things more valued in the modern world than freedom. Political discourse is shaped by it, as shown by the degree to which political campaigns and public policy are framed in terms of the need to counter threats to freedom on both the national and international levels. Economic theory is also defined by it, as seen both in the resources devoted to securing 'free trade' agreements among nations and in the way that advertisements appeal to the consumer to exercise—and thereby confirm—her freedom in selecting one product over another. Within this increasingly globalized cultural matrix, to be a person is to be free, and to be free is to be able to *choose*—whether among actual items visible on a shelf or possible futures envisioned in the mind. Freedom is understood as a matter of radical self-determination, and on every side we are encouraged to think that exercising such freedom is our most fundamental calling—the proper fulfilment of our humanity.

Freedom was also very important for early Christians. The Graeco-Roman cultural context within which Christianity emerged was deeply shaped by different types of fatalism. Human life was understood to be subject to an array of forces beyond the individual's control, and a variety of means were used to cope with them, ranging from the popular use of amulets and spells to philosophers' efforts to secure a spirit of indifference in the face of fortune's slings and arrows. Over against such beliefs, Christians insisted that human beings were free. The New Testament bears consistent witness to the belief that Christ came to free women and men from powers seeking to enslave them (John 8: 31–2, 36; Acts 13: 39; Rom. 8: 2; Gal. 5: 1), and in the face of ('Gnostic') movements within the church for which a person's destiny was understood to be determined at least partly by forces outside her control, Christians doubled down on the principle that, 'God made human beings free from the beginning, having their own power (just like their own souls) to obey the precepts of God voluntarily rather than by divine compulsion' (Irenaeus, *Adu.haer*. 4. 37, PG 7a. 1099B).

As this last quotation suggests, however, the early Christian understanding of freedom is rather different from that celebrated in contemporary culture. The freedom (p. 517) valued by ancient theologians was not the capacity to choose among a range of available options, but rather the ability to do just one thing: 'obey the commands of God'.

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The difference between these two perspectives is nowhere clearer than in the thought of Maximus the Confessor, for whom the act of *choosing* was a mark of the imperfection rather than the fulfilment of human freedom. To be truly free for Maximus is not to be able to choose, but to have transcended the circumstances that make the exercise of choice necessary. Even as God does not choose the good, but wills it naturally, so the goal of human existence is to be so united to God that by grace we, too, will the good without any deliberation. From this perspective, the point of human freedom is not radical self-determination. Because we are *creatures* whose life and movement depend at every moment on the Creator, the quest for self-determination can only lead to self-destruction. Our proper goal is rather to do what God wills, since it is only as we conform to the will of the One who brought us into being that we can flourish as the creatures we are.

The Will as Part of Human Nature

At first blush this vision of freedom can seem distasteful, if not downright demonic. Given the many ways in which tyrants both past and present have sought to bend others to their own designs, the idea that our freedom might be realized in conforming our wills to another's is not appealing. From Maximus' perspective, however, that objection is misplaced precisely because the 'other' to whom we are to conform our wills is *God*. It just makes no sense to suppose that conforming to God's will could entail any diminishment of our being: since the divine will is the sole and constant condition of our existence, our flourishing as the particular creatures we are is only possible as God's will for us is fulfilled. To make any *creature's* will the measure of our own would indeed be demonic, but deviation from *God's* will, far from bearing witness to our status as free beings, can only undermine our freedom.

And yet even if the logic of this position is impregnable, it can still seem odd to suggest that the single-minded pursuit of conformity to God's will exemplifies human freedom. If the point of our existence is simply to fulfil God's will for us, then it surely would have been better for God to make us creatures of instinct, or even inanimate objects, which do what their Creator wills necessarily. After all, it is evidently because we have wills which, as free, are distinct from God's that it is possible for us to fail to conform to God's will for us. And yet Maximus concurs with the judgement of the Christian tradition from Irenaeus onwards that our freedom, ontologically rooted in our status as willing beings, is a mark of our status as creatures made for communion with God and, as such, is to be viewed as a gift and not a threat to our flourishing.

In order to understand how this can be, it is important to recognize that although the idea of human freedom and agency was an integral part of Christian anthropology (p. 518) from the beginning, little attention was given to the will in Greek Christian writing prior to Maximus. The concept of the will as an anthropological category distinct from cognition or emotion was not a feature of classical Greek thought, and even among early Christian writers, there was no consistent terminology for the will (Dihle 1982). To be sure, Augustine had developed a very detailed theology of the will in the early decades of the fifth century, but Augustine wrote in Latin, and his influence was correspondingly limited to the western churches. In spite of Maximus' own long sojourn in North Africa—as well as his general sympathy with Latin theology—there is no evidence that he was familiar with Augustine's writings (Berthold 1982; cf. Börjesson 2015).

Nevertheless, the will was an important category for Maximus long before the monothelite controversy brought it centre-stage in his theology. Already in his earlier writings, he describes the goal of the human existence as the alignment of the believer's will with God's, a process initiated in this life through the disciplines of ascesis and contemplation and completed in the life to come when we will 'surrender voluntarily to God', having been 'taught to refrain from willing anything other than what God wills' (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1076B; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 52). To be sure, this understanding of the proper end of human existence as a union of divine and human wills was anything but novel, and Maximus drew on a well-established tradition of Christian spiritual practice in sketching it out (Sherwood 1955b: 8). But none of these traditions included the kind of technical analysis of (or even consistent vocabulary for) the will that Maximus developed in the course of his engagement with monotheletism. To address that context, Maximus had to relate the will to the ontological categories developed in the course of the trinitarian and christological controversies: was the will part of human *nature*, or should it rather be associated with the individual *hypostasis*?

The monothelites defended the latter position, in line with their claim that Christ had just one (divine) will, corresponding to his hypostatic identity as the one Word of God. By contrast, Maximus' conviction that the Word

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could only be confessed as incarnate if Jesus possessed a human as well as a divine will led him to argue that the will pertained to nature. Drawing on the soteriological principle (given classical expression by Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep.* 101. 32) that Christ could not heal what he had not assumed, Maximus argued that since it was beyond dispute that the human will, by turning from God in Eden, was in need of healing, it must have been part of the nature that Christ assumed (*Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 196D; *DP*, PG 91. 325A). Maximus also deployed a second line of argument against monothelitism on trinitarian grounds. If will pertained to the hypostasis, he reasoned, it would follow that God has three wills, corresponding to the three divine hypostases; but that would amount to tritheism, since it would raise the ontological possibility of divergence of will among the three divine persons (*Opusc*. 3, PG 91. 52B–C, 53C).[1] Since it was a matter of theological consensus that the one God has just one will, the doctrine of the Trinity, too, implies that will pertains to nature rather than to hypostasis (*Opusc*. 20, PG 91. 240B).

(p. 519) Although both these lines of argument are compelling on their own terms, they do little to reveal the core of Maximus' position, which is not simply an exercise in logic-chopping but rather derives from his understanding of the fundamental character of human nature. Specifically, Maximus' theology of the will is rooted in his conviction that motion is intrinsic to created beings (*DP*, PG 91. 352A). In itself this claim would not have struck Maximus' contemporaries as new. Already in the second century Irenaeus of Lyons had argued that creatures are made to move, on the grounds that, because perfection is a property of God's *uncreated* nature, whatever is *created* cannot, as a matter of definition, possess perfection intrinsically but can only acquire it over time (Irenaeus, *Adu.haer*. 4. 38, PG 7a. 1105A–B, 1107C). Maximus concurs (*Amb.Io*. 7, PG 91. 1072C), and develops this principle as part of his broader effort to rescue monastic spirituality from the extremes of the movement known as 'Origenism'. As the name suggests, the Origenist monks of Maximus' time took their inspiration from the great third-century theologian Origen of Alexandria, who, following Plato, had viewed motion (κίνησις) as a defect: the cause and consequence of creatures' falling away from an original state of changeless perfection (στάσις) before God. God created the material world (γένεσις) in response to this Fall, as a means of helping souls escape the instability of movement and return to life with God. In line with Irenaeus' understanding of Creation, Maximus rejected this sequence, insisting that creaturely movement, far from being an obstacle to communion with God, is the means by which such communion is realized. So while for Origen, motion is a problem that leads to his interpreting Creation as a declension from God according to the sequence στάσις–κίνησις–γένεσις (rest–movement–becoming), Maximus' emphasis on the goodness of motion as an inherent feature of created being led him to reverse this trajectory and argue that salvation history moves from 'becoming' (γένεσις) to movement (κίνησις) to rest (στάσις) (see Portaru and Mueller-Jourdan 2015). Indeed, because for Maximus God's being is in its glory inexhaustible, even the terminal condition of 'rest' (στάσις) is anything but 'static'. Building on Gregory of Nyssa's notion of eternal progress (ἐπεκτάσις), Maximus argues that the sheer inexhaustibility of God's being means that, even in glory, the life of creatures does not stand still: it no longer includes any qualitative shifts in direction or character, but remains supremely active and is therefore to be described paradoxically as a 'rest that is always in motion' (ἀεικίνητος στάσις).[2]

While it is thus part of the nature of creatures to be in motion, Maximus notes that each creature moves in its own distinctive way, corresponding to its proper end as the particular kind of creature it is (*Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 200B). In living creatures, motion is a function of appetite or desire (ὀρέξις), and since this desire is part of the creature's nature, within Maximus' ontology it is true to say creatures achieve their distinct forms of perfection by following their natural desires: 'For unless it has a desire for something according to nature, whence and how can it be said to exist in any way, since it has neither concrete existence (ὕπαρξιν) nor motion (κίνησιν)?' (*Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 192B). **(p. 520)** Rather conventionally, Maximus sees rationality as a distinctive mark of human nature, and he contends (somewhat less conventionally) that the fact that human nature is rational makes the realization of human desire a matter of agency (αὐτεξουσία).[3] And since he holds that agency, in turn, is actualized through the exercise of the will, he concludes that will (θέλημα) may be characterized as 'the proper and primary property of every rational nature' (*Opusc.* 3, Louth 1996: 197).[4] As Maximus notes in his *Dispute with Pyrrhus*: 'If agential motion (αὐτεξούσιος κίνησις) is natural for rational beings, then every rational being is also by nature willing (θελήτικον)' (*DP*, PG 91. 301C). In short, because they are agents, human beings are *willing* creatures, which is to say that their movements are characterized by agency rather than being unconscious or automatic. In short, motion is not just something that happens to me; rather, *I* move.

For Maximus human freedom is thus a function of our having wills. All creatures move, but the movement of human beings is free because humans are rational—and therefore willing—creatures. And this freedom, enacted through

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the will, has concrete effects: because our motion is willed rather than automatic, we can move in ways that either further or frustrate the goal of life in communion with God for which we were created. It follows that although in heaven all the saints will find their wills in accord with God, each individual's place before God will be a function of the degree to which her will has shaped her desire for God in this life: 'To whatever extent anyone has desired, to that extent will she participate in the object of her desire' (*Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 24D–25A; cf. *Amb.Io*. 31, PG 91. 1280D). In this way our willing is integral to the shape of our life before God, both now and in the world to come. This conclusion, however, raises a question: By claiming that how we will defines how we will live in glory, does not Maximus wind up lending support to the modern view of freedom as self-determination—the libertarian capacity to choose among various options? As we will see, Maximus certainly considers the possibility that freedom might be understood in this way—but only to reject it.

'Willing is Not Choosing'

For Maximus the will's role in shaping our life before God is integral to his understanding of human freedom, but careful analysis of his understanding of how the will operates is at odds with the modern vision of freedom as a kind of neutral power indifferently capable of turning one way or the other. Like Irenaeus, Maximus sees the point of human willing as specifically the power to do what *God* wills. Thus, even prior to the (p. 521) emergence of monothelitism he interprets human turning from God, not as the product of the will's freedom, but rather as the result of the will's failure to act in accordance with its God-given freedom:

> [T]he only pleasure is the attainment of divine things whose giver by nature is God and … the only sorrow is their loss, suggested by the devil but accomplished by whoever grows weary of divine things by relaxing his will and who does not keep up the love of what is honorable by a firm disposition of will.
>
> (*Or.dom*., Van Deun 1991: 63–4; Berthold 1985: 115)

It is, however, only in the context of his engagement with the monothelites that Maximus refines his terminology in a way that brings the contrast between his theology of the will and modern sensibilities into relief. The central feature of this refinement is the distinction he draws between the 'natural will' (θέλημα φυσικόν, or just θέλημα) and the 'gnomic will' (θέλημα γνωμικόν, or just γνώμη).

As a first step towards understanding this distinction, it is crucial to recognize that the natural will and the gnomic will are not two separate components of human nature. For Maximus, human beings have one will, which, as already noted, is intrinsic to their nature as rational beings, and which for this reason he calls the 'natural' will. Because it is a defining feature of human nature, the natural will is to be found in all human beings whatever their context: infancy or old age, Eden or Babylon, now or in glory. What is this natural will? As noted above, the *will* is that aspect of our being that defines us as agents; thus it defines the kind of motion proper to us as rational creatures and is thus the means by which our perfection as rational creatures is actualized. And to define this motion as *natural* is to indicate that it is manifested in those thoroughly unremarkable, everyday appetites by which 'we desire being, life, movement, understanding, speech, perception, nourishment, sleep, refreshment, as well as not to suffer pain or to die—simply to possess completely everything that sustains the nature and to lack whatever harms it' (*Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 196A).[5] The *natural will* is therefore that by which we are constituted as beings who follow the desires that are intrinsic to our natures as responsible agents rather than as creatures of instinct.

In contrast to the natural will, which is a constitutive and inalienable feature of human *nature*, the gnomic will refers to the activation of this natural power by an individual human person, or *hypostasis*: it is 'a particular instance of willing, oriented relative to some real or imagined good' (*DP*, PG 91. 308C; cf. *Opusc*. 3, PG 91. 45C). In other words, the gnomic will is a particular mode (τρόπος) of willing rather than a discrete attribute of human nature separate from the natural will (*DP*, PG 91. 308D; cf. 292D–293A). More specifically, it is the mode of willing characteristic of human life under the conditions of history. As we live in the realm of time and space, prior to glory, our vision of the good is uncertain. Since our human nature is God's work, if our nature were perfected, our willing would correspond infallibly to God's will so long as we followed our (natural) (p. 522) desires. But because we have not yet achieved perfection—because the fulfilment of our natures is a matter of future hope rather than present experience—our desires are conflicting, with the result that we will under conditions of ignorance and doubt (*DP*, PG 91. 329D). For this reason, our willing assumes a 'gnomic' form marked by a sequence of distinct stages that interpose themselves between our immediate desire, on the one hand, and the completed act of willing,

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on the other. According to Maximus, when we are moved by desire, we first deliberate, then by an act of judgement form an opinion (the meaning of the Greek word γνώμη), and finally choose one option over others (*Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 16C; cf. 21D–24A).

The fact that we exist in a condition where our willing entails our choosing among possible courses of action raises the possibility of error—that we will make bad judgements and correspondingly poor choices. When we do, the result is sin, which for Maximus is precisely 'the divergence of our gnomic will from the divine will' (*Opusc*. 3, PG 91. 56B). In other words, sin is a product of gnomic willing that results when, through our failure of deliberation, judgement, and choice, 'nature is moved against reason and law' (*Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 192A; cf. 193A). Yet as much as it is true that human sin is bound up with gnomic willing, it would be a serious mistake to view the former as the inevitable result of the latter, as though the *gnomic* will were equivalent to the *fallen* will. Such an equation of gnomic and sinful willing would imply that the Fall was inevitable for creatures living under the conditions of time and space—a position that would impugn the goodness of nature in a way completely at odds with Maximus' theology of Creation.[6] While our deliberation is inherently fallible for Maximus—to the extent that he seems to have viewed the Fall as following immediately on our Creation (*Q.Thal.* 61, Laga–Steel 1990: 85; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 131 and n.1)—it is not for that reason predestined to fail. Indeed, Maximus bases his spirituality on the presumption that even after the Fall we can, through ascetic discipline and divine grace, make genuine progress towards blessedness in this life even though our willing remains gnomic prior to glory. In spite of its fallibility, the gnomic will can and does will rightly when the results of its deliberation correspond to the proper end of human nature—and thereby to God's will as manifest in that nature (*DP*, PG 91. 293B–C; cf. *Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 193B–C).

As beings who will gnomically, we *choose*: discerning as best we can among the options that we identify as leading to eternal blessedness. That we will by choosing is, according to Maximus, a function of our status as creatures who will in an earthly context, still awaiting the fulfilment of our lives in glory. It is therefore true that our choosing is a manifestation of the freedom we enjoy as agents. Creatures who lack agency—animals, plants, inanimate objects—cannot choose (and are for this reason incapable of sinning, though they do, of course, suffer sin's effects). Yet as much as the capacity to choose is possible only for creatures with wills, choosing and willing cannot simply be equated, because: (p. 523)

> [T]he will (θέλημα) is a rational and living desire, but choice (προαίρεσιν) is a deliberative desire for things within our power. Therefore willing (θέλησις) is not choosing, for willing is a simple desire, rational and living; but choice is a confluence of desire, deliberation, and judgement. For when we desire, we first deliberate; and when we have deliberated, we make a judgement; and after we have judged, we choose what has been received by our judgement as better rather than worse. So willing depends solely on what is natural, but choice on those capacities that belong to us and operate through us. Therefore, choosing is not willing.
>
> (*Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 13A)

In this life we choose, and our choices help to define who we are before God both now and in the world to come; but the freedom that characterizes us as willing beings is not defined by the capacity to choose. Under the conditions of history our willing as human persons takes the form of choosing, which is a matter of calculation in which we try to distinguish what is better from what is worse; but choosing is not constitutive of willing, which in its essence is simply the agential enactment of our natural desires.

The contrast between this perspective of Maximus' and earlier pagan notions of human agency is striking. In classical Greek thought, freedom was understood in terms of deliberation in a way that corresponds fairly closely to modern sensibilities: for both ancient philosophical and modern secular thought, a 'positive verdict on a man's moral performance can be justified only by a positive intellectual achievement which preceded and determined his intentions to act' (Dihle 1982: 31; cf. 29). For Maximus, however, although deliberation is an integral part of human willing under the conditions of history, it is not a defining mark of the will's freedom. On the contrary, it reflects an imperfect and partial realization of freedom, since deliberation is necessary because creatures willing under the conditions of time and space are unable to perceive and know the good immediately. As seen in the life of God and the blessed, freedom is fully and perfectly realized when rational beings will according to their natures, without the need for deliberation.

Thus, although willing is integral to the life of rational creatures, choosing is not. But this conclusion seems to raise

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once again the question of how this account of willing is consistent with a robust notion of creaturely responsibility. If the proper object of our natural willing is—as the name implies—determined by our nature, then the character of rational existence (whether human or angelic) seems fundamentally passive. Unlike animals, we may be conscious of our actions, but it is not immediately evident that this consciousness has any constructive role in determining how we act—and therefore whether our having wills renders our actions other than instinctual in anything but name. As Pyrrhus, the exiled patriarch of Constantinople, objected, it seems that by making the will part of human nature (that is, one of those intrinsic properties of our being over which we have no control), Maximus makes freedom an illusion (*DP*, PG 91. 293B). In order to show that this inference is mistaken, Maximus takes one more step in his analysis, arguing that because rational creatures are called to transcend their natures in order to live in communion with God, the operation of the natural will cannot be reduced to pure passivity before our natural desires.

(p. 524) Willing as Following

According to Maximus, the will is 'natural' because its activity corresponds to nature, but that fact does not rob willing of its freedom and turn it into a matter of compulsion. On the contrary, willing is precisely that which marks the one who wills as an agent—an 'I' who is the subject of her acts rather than a being driven by instinct. Indeed, Maximus' estimation of the significance of the will for human experience can be gauged from his endorsement of the principle (which he attributes to Cyril of Alexandria) that 'in a rational nature, nothing natural is involuntary' (*DP*, PG 91. 296A).

It is important not to misunderstand the meaning of this claim. Maximus is well aware that the degree to which different forms of human activity display a 'voluntary' character varies enormously. Certain actions happen almost automatically (indeed, Maximus at one point defends the 'natural' character of the will on the grounds that no one needs to be taught to follow the desires inherent to human nature; see *DP*, PG 91. 304B–C); others are much more clearly intentional. In all cases, however, the will is implicated. For even in those actions I do apart from (and even perhaps in spite of) any conscious effort, it is *I* who do them: I am the subject of, say, my sweating and sleeping and being afraid no less than of my walking or speaking or playing chess, although the latter are far more subject to my conscious control than the former. Thus, while my being subject to hunger is no less a part of my nature than it is part of my dog's, my situation is different from my dog's in that my hunger is inseparable from my will—not in the sense that my being hungry is a matter of choice, but simply in that I cannot help describing it as *mine*.

There is, of course, a further difference between me and my dog: I can deliberate about how (or even whether) to satisfy my hunger as my dog cannot. Based on what I have already noted about the character of the gnomic will, however, it should be clear that this difference is not of final significance for my humanity, since in glory my (natural) willing will no longer be characterized by (gnomic) deliberation; but I will not for that reason be any less human—or, therefore, any less free. On the contrary, if Maximus is right, it is only in glory that my freedom will have been perfected. And it is at this point that it seems difficult to square the idea of the natural will, operating apart from any need for deliberation, with freedom. For part of what makes the idea of freedom compelling is that it provides the basis for human drama: a person stands at the crossroads—she may act honourably or despicably, show courage or cowardice, devotion, or faithlessness. Which will it be? The answer, we are confident, defines who that person is—her fundamental identity before God and neighbour. Maximus' belief that our (gnomic) willing in the present shapes the character of our future glory seems entirely consistent with this picture. Yet if the experience of choosing that we associate with the image of the crossroads is simply an accidental feature of our willing that will eventually be transcended, does that not suggest that for Maximus the life of glory lacks any dimension of growth, change, or adventure—and thus is ultimately boring?

(p. 525) Given that (as already noted) Maximus envisions glorified existence as a rest that is always in motion, it seems unlikely that he intends his vision of heaven to be open to this line of criticism. And the charge becomes even less plausible when we remember that the possibility that heaven might be experienced as boring is actually a defining feature of the Origenist cosmology that Maximus opposed long before the monothelites came on the scene. Famously, Origen hypothesized that satiety—boredom—was the cause of the primordial defection of rational natures from their contemplation of God. Within Origen's vision of a universe of rational beings created in a state of intimacy with God, freedom is manifest in their fall from blessedness rather than their ascent to it, and the drama of willing unfolds initially through sin rather than obedience.[7] By contrast—and consistent with his conviction

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that motion is intrinsic to created existence—Maximus' vision of the place of the will in creaturely existence is different, so that as keen as he is to distinguish willing from choosing, it would be a mistake to ascribe to him Origen's vision of human life as ideally free of genuine drama or adventure. To be sure, Maximus is happy to concede that most of what we experience as drama in our lives is very much the result of our choosing. As creatures inhabiting the world of time and space, we cannot help but choose, and as creatures held under the power of sin, we invariably choose badly. These two facts of our existence provide more than enough material for much of history's drama: 'fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these' (Gal. 5: 19–21). Even when we are enabled to choose rightly through grace, it would seem that the drama of the human venture remains a function of our susceptibility to sin: we may give into it or resist it, but either way it is the danger of sin that gives life its spice. It therefore seems natural to ask whether in the absence of the Fall human life would have been anodyne: free of evil, but equally free of the passion, risk, and challenge we naturally associate with our efforts to realize the good.

In order to see how Maximus approaches this issue, it is necessary to move from general features of his anthropology to the specifically christological terrain on which he engaged monothelitism. Recall that in opposition to the monothelite claim that Christ had only one divine will, corresponding to his one divine hypostasis, Maximus insisted that the Chalcedonian definition demanded the confession of two (natural) wills in Christ, corresponding to his divine and human natures. To deny that Christ has a human *will* was to contradict the confession that he had a human *nature* fully consubstantial with ours. At the same time, because Christ's *hypostasis* was divine (since he is none other than the second person of the Trinity), his vision of God's will was necessarily unimpeded, and this, in turn, meant that his willing did not include the uncertainty characteristic of all other human willing in time and space. Maximus concluded that, though Christ had a fully functional human will as part of his human nature, the fact that he enjoyed an unimpeded vision of God's will from birth meant that this will (p. 526) was already deified during his earthly ministry. He therefore did not will gnomically, 'as we do, by investigation and deliberation, but as one who subsists divinely (θεϊκῶς ὑποστάς)' (*DP*, PG 91. 309A). Because his will was deified, Christ's earthly experience was qualitatively different from that of every other human being who has ever lived, but—crucially—this difference was a function of his being a divine hypostasis and not of any alteration in the essential properties of his human nature. For deification, like fallenness, names a particular mode in which a human nature is lived out, not a modification of its fundamental character as *human* (in distinction from, say, angelic or divine).

Since the fact that Christ's will was deified from birth is the anthropological basis of his sinlessness (since a will that is deified cannot sin), Christ provides a test case for the idea that the drama in human life is a function of our liability to sin. Because he is a human being, all his human actions are the product of his human (natural) will; but because he did not will gnomically, he could not err in its perception of the good and was therefore perfectly obedient in everything (Phil. 2: 8). And yet his story does not lack drama. To be sure, much of this drama has to do with Christ's confronting unclean spirits or malicious human beings, and so it might seem that here, too, the tension in his biography is generated by sin, even if the source of that sin is not any weakness or division within Christ's own soul. Yet Maximus identifies one point in the Gospel narratives where the drama of the situation has nothing to do with resistance to sin—Christ's prayers in Gethsemane. In his analysis of this story (which is the biblical *crux interpretandum* in his battles with the monothelites), Maximus isolates a form of human drama that is not pegged to sin. Although Christ cannot sin, he speaks to God 'with loud cries and tears' (Heb. 5: 7) as he struggles to reconcile himself to the prospect of a violent death. Moreover, this struggle is described specifically in terms of Christ's praying, 'Not my will but yours be done' (Luke 22: 42). How is this to be understood?

Gnomic willing is a characteristic of human hypostases living in time and space and thus lacking an immediate perception of the good. Christ does not have a gnomic will because his hypostasis is the divine Word. Although he has a fully human nature, the fact that his hypostasis is divine means that his human will is completely deified and therefore suffers from none of the uncertainty that produces the sequence of deliberation, judgement, and choice in all other earthly human willing, since [that which is deified is completely and thoroughly united (to God), though not in any way transcending the difference of essence (between divine and human natures), since it remains unconfused in the union] (*Opusc*. 20, PG 91. 236B). As deified, Christ's human will—all the while remaining fully human—is completely united to God. How then can he experience the kind of tension that marks his agony in the garden?

The answer to this question is tied to the idea of vocation, understood as the fulfilment of human life before God.

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This fulfilment comes in glory, and glorified life does not come to us naturally. It is by definition beyond the capacities of created nature, since it consists precisely in sharing the blessings of God's uncreated existence. It is therefore a gift, but it is not for that reason any less a matter of our willing, since even a gift must be received, and we must will to receive it. And the fact that it is a gift we are blessed to (p. 527) enjoy in eternity means that its reception is not finally a product of the gnomic will. For although, as already noted, our gnomic willing in this life shapes our place before God in glory, the fact that glorified humans no longer will gnomically implies that our vocations are perfected through the exercise of our natural wills. Because Jesus' unique constitution as the Word incarnate means that he lacks a gnomic will at every point of his existence, it follows that he fulfils his calling as Saviour through his natural will alone. And this means, in turn, that the agony in the garden—a struggle in which Jesus seeks to discern his calling ('the cup' that lies before him)—must be interpreted in terms of the dynamics of the natural will apart from any appeal to 'gnomic' deliberation.

Maximus makes this point by appealing to the character of human vocation. For any human being to fulfil her vocation is to exceed the possibilities of her nature, since created nature (precisely because it is 'natural') falls short of glory (which, insofar as it designates the participation of the created in uncreated blessedness, may properly be called 'supernatural'). From this perspective, Jesus' hesitation in the Gethsemane prayer should not be understood in terms of sin, because fear of death is a natural impulse, and therefore has nothing sinful about it, since 'nothing that is natural can be opposed to God in any way' (Louth 1996: 194; cf. *DP*, PG 91. 297C). Jesus' desire to avoid death is therefore not an example of (sinful) resistance to God, but rather a sign of the limits of nature's capacities. In order to fulfil one's vocation, it is not sufficient to follow the course of nature, since 'the fact that a human will is not contrary to God is not sufficient for the union (of deification); for everything that is natural and undistorted is neither opposed to nor completely united to God' (*Opusc*. 20, PG 91. 236A). To achieve the higher level of unity that constitutes deification, a person must follow God's call, which summons us beyond what nature can enact or even conceive. According to Maximus, this is precisely what Jesus did:

> Therefore he said, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not mine but your will be done;' showing in the shrinking, the [natural] determination of the human will, [subsequently] shaped and brought to be [in harmony with the divine will] in accordance with the interweaving of the natural *logos* with the mode of the economy.
>
> (*Opusc.* 3, PG 91. 48C; trans. Louth 1996: 194)

In other words, once Jesus had registered his natural fear of death:

> [S]traightaway he set alongside the powerful impulse to flee death the supreme agreement and unity of his human will with the will common to him and the Father, and in this determination said, 'Let not my will but yours be done.' Thus, he put aside both any division [of his human will] from the Father's will and any confusion with it.
>
> (*Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 197A)

The drama in Jesus' story is thus triggered by the challenge of obedience to God's call rather than the temptation to disobedience: Jesus is not struggling *against* the power of sin, but *for* the upward call of God. It follows that sin is not a necessary condition for a (p. 528) life of adventure. As resistance to God's will, sin has no proper place in God's intentions for human beings. But it does not follow that human life apart from sin is monotonous. Precisely because human beings—who, as creatures, have no inherent capacity for blessedness—are meant for a life of bliss that exceeds the reach of nature, our lives include real adventure, as we are called to exercise our wills beyond nature towards the goal of the heavenly call of God first perfected in Jesus (Phil. 3: 14). In this way (and somewhat paradoxically), the activity of the natural will comes into particular relief as it is summoned by God to transcend the demands of nature in pursuit of a higher aim. As we respond to God's call, it becomes clear that our will is not a neutral centre of spontaneous activity. Rather, when it is operating properly, the will does not lead, but follows. And as it follows, it fulfils its role as the feature of our nature that gives us the opportunity 'to obey the commands of God voluntarily'.

Willing and the Vindication of Nature

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For Maximus the fulfilment of human freedom is not a matter of self-mastery, but a surrender of the self to God. This vision entails a particular understanding of the will, forged in the context of the monothelite controversy, but with anthropological implications that extend far beyond the finer points of Chalcedonian Christology. Chiefly, it provides for an understanding of the will that honours the fullness of human existence as comprising both body and soul. In this respect Maximus' mature theology of the will is of a piece with his lifelong resistance to Origenism. Like the monothelites (along with Pelagians and many in the modern West), Origen understood the will in highly abstract and disembodied terms, equating the freedom of the will with the capacity to diverge from the will of another being—including especially God. This perspective left him unable to explain how, even after the process of redemption was complete, souls could avoid falling away from God over and over again: the eternal possibility of turning from God seemed to be the criterion—and thus the price—of genuine creaturely freedom. So understood, freedom of the will is not an expression of human nature at all, but rather its antithesis, since where freedom is conceived in strictly libertarian terms, the idea of a divinely given nature that serves as the ontological substrate for the will's operation cannot help but appear as a constraint on its freedom. Within such a framework the only way for a created nature to achieve final blessedness free from the threat of defection is to be annihilated through absorption into God.

Maximus explicitly rejected this Origenist vision (*Amb.Io.* 7, PG 91. 1069A–D), developing instead a model of the will and its freedom that is not tied to a model of eternal libertarian indifference. While Origenists and monothelites alike saw the will as distinct from and sovereign over nature (which explains why monothelites saw no difficulty in rejecting the inference that Christ had to have a human will in order to be fully human), Maximus' location of the will within nature undercuts the view that there is an inherent tension between the freedom of the will and the givenness of human nature as including (p. 529) both body and soul. Since the will is part of nature, and all nature, as the Creation of God exists (naturally!) in concord both with itself and with God, the various features of human nature should not be construed as a constraint on the will's freedom. Quite the contrary: to follow the desires of nature is an expression of freedom, as exemplified in the life of Jesus, whose own experience of hunger, for example, was quintessentially human (since the divine nature cannot hunger any more than it can move from one place to another), but distinctive precisely because of its thoroughly voluntary character (*DP*, PG 91. 297D). Thus, where a monothelite like Pyrrhus could see no alternative between libertarian freedom on the one hand and the compulsion of nature on the other, Maximus insisted that 'in a rational nature, nothing natural is involuntary'. Even as God's infinite goodness is not any less an expression of divine freedom because God by nature cannot be otherwise than good, so the defining characteristics of human nature are rightly understood as expressions of freedom rather than as a sign of its limitations.

To be sure, because we are fallen creatures we do experience our will and our nature in tension, but this is testimony to our sinfulness—to the fact that we are somehow divided in our natures and therefore from God—and not to any necessary opposition between will and nature. In sin we certainly experience a lack of freedom, but this is a function of the fact that our sin has distorted our nature, so that its various parts do not operate in the harmony characteristic of God, the good angels, or the saints in heaven. Our hope is precisely that this division will be overcome, so that our willing ultimately accords with our nature—and therefore with the God who created it.

And yet it is a further dimension of Maximus' anthropology that the proper objects of our natural willing are not reducible to the inclinations of our nature. There is nothing natural about Christ's willing the cup of suffering; indeed, Maximus consistently maintains that to will death is *against* nature. That Christ should nevertheless be called to do so is a function of his status as the particular person he is, called to suffer for humanity's redemption. This model of calling, according to which each of us has, like Christ, a peculiar destiny that, although fully consistent with our nature as free beings, is not demanded by it, has a rough analogy in the divine life: God is not by nature Creator in the way that God is by nature good, and yet Creation is a work appropriate to God's nature, by which God freely enacts God's own divinity by willing to bring into being that which is other than God (see *DP*, PG 91. 293C).

This analogy is far from perfect (most obviously, God's glory would be in every way undiminished had God not created the world, while for Maximus human life that fails in its calling necessarily fails to achieve its proper glory). And even if we limit our focus to Jesus in Gethsemane, the contrast between (natural) willing and (gnomic) choosing in human life can seem strained. After all, given that Jesus undeniably changes the object of his willing in the garden, the refusal to describe his determination to follow God's call a choice can seem arbitrary (Bathrellos 2004: 151). Maximus' point here, however, is not primarily about the words used to describe Jesus' activity in the

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garden; it is rather that human action is not rightly viewed (as monothelites like Pyrrhus wanted to argue) in terms of the exclusive options of libertarian freedom or deterministic compulsion. The category of the natural will allows for a third possibility, disclosed in human life (p. 530) precisely through the discernment of one's calling. God does not work by compulsion, but neither is God's call a 'choice' in the sense of an option we confront indifferently as one among many available possibilities. Precisely because our calling is from *God* and thus is God's will for us, it is the only real possibility before us—but for Maximus that does not render our following it any less free.

One might draw the following analogy: one day I meet a person; later I fall in love with and marry her. While it is common to speak of not being able to help loving a person, it is nevertheless not accurate to speak of this process as a matter of compulsion, as though I exercised no agency in the matter and could therefore not truly say that *I* loved. But neither does it make sense to speak of it as a choice, as though my loving a certain person were a matter of conscious decision, such that I might equally well have chosen to refrain from loving. And yet precisely because it properly leads to a lifelong commitment, love is arguably the highest expression of my freedom as a human being, the act where the integrity of my agency is most in view and at stake. It is undeniably something I do—and therefore will—but it is not a matter of choosing between various options, even though (insofar as I remain in time and space) the way I live out my love is defined by innumerable choices.

Married love is not, of course, the image of human freedom most likely to come to the mind of a monk like Maximus, but insofar as marriage is understood as a Christian vocation, the analogy is entirely consistent with his doctrine of the natural will. And his insights provide an important challenge to contemporary sensibilities about freedom of the will. Insofar as we are inclined to understand freedom in terms of a liberty of indifference, we invariably view the will as the locus of that freedom, as the source of our identity, so that it is by our 'free' acts we make ourselves who we are. The problem is that the more we become aware of the ways in which our choices are, on the one hand, constrained and conditioned by a variety of psychological and social forces, and, on the other hand, broken and sinful in their execution, the more hopeless our situation appears. By placing the will at the centre of our sense of who we are, we condemn ourselves to a task of self-construction that is impossible, in which we always and inevitably fall short.

Over against this overburdening of the will with impossible expectations, Maximus' doctrine roots our identities in God in a way that allows the will to assume a real but restricted place in our overall make-up. The will is certainly crucial to our character as rational beings, but though it is one of the means whereby we realize our life with God, it is not the only one: our whole nature, with all its created features, is integral to our living as the particular creatures that we were created to be. No part simply trumps another, as though our identity were 'really' lodged in the will (or the mind or the heart) and other parts were more or less dispensable. The will has a particular role in that it marks our character as agents called to live out our lives in freedom—but it is no more integral to our lives before God than our bodies, our reason, our emotions, or any other aspect of our humanity, since it is precisely as fully human agents and not as disembodied wills that we are called to life with God and one another in glory. In this sense, it is a signal achievement of Maximus that in claiming the will as an integral part of human nature, (p. 531) he limits its significance. Precisely because it is *part* of my nature, the will does not govern, compete with, or ground it. Indeed, its role is primarily to *follow* the various natural desires that make for my flourishing, bringing them to fulfilment by appropriating them as mine. It takes a leading role with respect to the rest of my nature only as it finds itself called to follow another leader: the One who created it and wills to bring it to a perfection that is entirely beyond its own capacities, but which has been offered to all people as a gift to be received—willingly.

Suggested Reading

For a discussion of Maximus' sources for his terminology on the will, see Madden (1982). On Maximus' relation to 'Origenism', see von Balthasar (2003) and Sherwood (1955b). An excellent review of the evolution of the distinction between hypostasis and nature in the century after Chalcedon is found in Grillmeier (1995). Thunberg (1995) gives a fine introduction to the relationship between the natural and gnomic wills as part of his magisterial study of Maximus' anthropology. For studies focussing on the significance of Gethsemane for Maximus' arguments with the monothelites, see Léthel (1982) and Doucet (1985). More recently, Bathrellos (2004) and Hovorun (2008) explore more comprehensively the way in which Christology shapes Maximus' understanding of the will, and Blowers (2012) explores how the category of the gnomic will is further developed in the work of John of Damascus.

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Notes:

([1]) Cf. *DP*, PG 91. 289D, 313C–316B.

([2]) *Q.Thal.* 59, Laga–Steel 1990: 53, and *Q.Thal.* 65, Laga–Steel 1990: 285; *Opusc*. 16, PG 91. 185A; *Amb.Io.* 67, PG 91. 1401A.

([3]) Αὐτεξουσία means literally, 'power over oneself', and is often translated, 'self-determination', 'freedom of choice', or even 'free will'. Because these English terms carry considerable philosophical and political freight alien to the patristic era, I prefer 'agency', which distinguishes αὐτεξουσία (along with its cognates, αὐτεξούσιος and αὐτεξιουτής) from the categories of choice and will (for which Maximus has other words), while maintaining the focus on individual ownership of/responsibility for action that lies at the heart of Maximus' use of the word (see, e.g., *Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 17C–20A).

([4]) Cf. *Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 21D, and *DP*, PG 91. 304C.

([5]) Cf. *Opusc*. 1, PG 91. 12C; *Opusc*. 3, PG 91. 45D.

([6]) John Gavin's claim that Maximus has no way to account for the origin of human sin (Gavin 2009: 282–3) is based on this failure to recognize the distinction between the gnomic will (the ontological *ground* of bad choices) and the fallen will (the concrete *result* of bad choices).

([7]) There is no more brilliant caricature of this vision of heaven than that given in the 1967 film *Bedazzled* by Peter Cook's Satan, who explains the Fall as the result of an inevitable—and entirely understandable—rebellion against a life of eternal sameness.

Ian A. McFarland

Ian A. McFarland is Bishop Mack B. and Rose Y. Stokes Professor of Theology and Associate Dean of Faculty and Academic Affairs at Emory University's Candler School of Theology.

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Maximus and Modern Psychology

Michael Bakker

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Abstract and Keywords

Psychology as a science started to develop in the West when Maximus the Confessor was still relatively unknown. There are some analogies that are worth exploring, even though there is no evidence of any significant influence of his thinking on modern psychology. In this chapter the following main parallels are treated: firstly, that between Maximus' ascetic teachings about, amongst others, discursive reason (*logos*) and cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT); and secondly, that between Maximus' view of the human intellect (*nous*) and depth psychology as developed by Freud, Jung, and Assagioli.

Keywords: psychology, cognitive-behavioural therapy, human intellect, reason, depth psychology, Freud, Jung

PSYCHOLOGY as a science started to develop in the West when Maximus was still relatively unknown. There are some analogies that are worth exploring, even though there is no evidence of any significant influence of his thinking on modern psychology. In this chapter the following two parallels will be treated: (1) that between Maximus' ascetic teachings and cognitive therapy and (2) that between his view of the soul and depth psychology.

By way of introduction, let us turn to Maximus' letter to George the prefect of the province of Africa, the first of his epistles according to the numbering of the PG. After comparing his friend to nothing less than the sun, Maximus remarks that virtue is a matter of intention (γνώμη) rather than rank, and imitation of God a matter of disposition (διάθεσις) rather than dignity (*Ep*. 1, PG 91. 364A). He also contrasts the blessed ones like prefect George, in whom the firm love for God has taken root in the depth of their souls, with those who prefer material things, whose disposition (διάθεσις) is not fixed but is subject to change (PG 91. 364B–365A). He then writes the following: 'Nothing of what exists, my blessed master, can divert you from the good and deifying habit (ἕξις) that accompanies your intention (γνώμη) on your way towards God' (PG 91. 365B). We encounter here three keywords in Maximus' vocabulary—διάθεσις, ἕξις, and γνώμη—which often occur together in his oeuvre. The first of them, διάθεσις, can be translated in a straightforward manner as 'disposition'. The second, ἕξις, is a noun derived from the Greek word 'to have' (like its Latin counterpart *habitus*), indicating an acquired state or pattern of behaviour. The third term, γνώμη, has even more shades of meaning (opinion, choice, disposition of willing) in addition to the translation 'intention'; in fact, this is the word that Maximus used to differentiate the deliberative 'gnomic will' from the stable 'natural will' (as part of his intellectual battle with the monothelite heresy). In cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), one encounters a similar stress on habits or behavioural patterns with which are connected opinions and automatic thoughts.

(p. 534) In his letter Maximus also mentions the 'depth of the soul' (PG 91. 385C) and the 'hidden part of the heart' (PG 91. 380B). These are notions one finds in other parts of his writings as well and they suggest a parallel with depth psychology. The name of this type of psychology suggests a realm below, and is often associated with the notion of the unconscious, and the sexual and aggressive drives of a human being. The name that comes to mind in this context is of course that of psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who is often associated with the term

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'subconscious', although he himself preferred 'unconscious'. In his topology of the soul he positions the drives in the *id*, below the *ego*. The spatial metaphor is taken up by Kallistos Ware, who criticizes Freudian psychoanalysis for guiding us 'not to the "ladder that leads to the kingdom", but to the staircase that goes down to a dank and snake-infested cellar' (Ware 1996: 56). The term 'unconscious', however, leaves room for a realm above; in fact, this was proposed by the Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae (1903–93), who discerned within the unconscious a 'supraconscious'. This is the 'room upstairs, where superior powers are stored and function, ready to flood the conscious life and even the subconscious, with their cleansing power, when we offer them the [right] conditions' (Stăniloae 2002: 98). Although he does not refer to it, Stăniloae, as a student of Maximus, must have read the Confessor's response to the question of his friend Thalassius about the upper room where the Last Supper was held. Typically, Maximus gives this room a deeper sense: it is 'the large and spacious understanding (διάνοια) and the familiarity with knowledge (γνῶσις) embellished with divine visions of mystical and ineffable doctrines' (*Q.Thal*. 3, Laga–Steel 1980: 59). So there appears to be a hidden part of the heart below and above.

Using the spatial metaphor we could say that, along the horizontal axis, we will compare Maximus' practical advice on handling thoughts and developing good habits with a modern cognitive(-behavioural) therapist's down-to-earth treatment of behavioural problems. Since it will not be possible to give an in-depth description of CBT, I will use as main reference for this type of psychotherapy, *Ancient Christian Wisdom and Aaron Beck's Cognitive Therapy: A Meeting of Minds* (Trader 2011; reviewed in Bakker 2012). Because over the last thirty years there has appeared 'an abundance of treatment outcome studies demonstrating CBT's efficacy for most forms of psychopathology including anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, schizophrenia, personality disorders and more' (Boswell et al. 2011: 107), this form of short-term psychotherapy is widely applied nowadays and preferred by insurance companies. Classical psychoanalysis, as developed by Freud, on the other hand, involves many sessions over a longer period and is less and less applied. This is not necessarily the case for other schools of depth psychology that we will look at, when we explore the vertical axis. In general, the psychodynamic approach (another name for depth psychology) has less empirical support than CBT, because, '[h]istorically, psychodynamic research focussed primarily upon the intensive study of individual patients (i.e., the case study) instead of large-scale trials' (Boswell et al. 2011: 103).

Before tracing the background of Maximus' psychology, which precedes the sections dealing with the two parallels, we have to look at the methodological difficulty **(p. 535)** of comparing thinkers who lived in different ages and under totally different circumstances. While for modern humanity the devil is perhaps merely a figure of speech, Maximus interprets King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in Jeremiah 34 (LXX = TM Jer. 27) as the devil (*Q.Thal*. 26, Laga–Steel 1980: 173). Moreover, he speaks about him as a real person, who has an intention (γνώμη) in line with sinners who willingly abandon God to pursue pleasure (Laga–Steel 1980: 175); God allows him and his demons to tempt us, as he did with Job. 'The demons either tempt us themselves or arm against us those who have no fear of the Lord. They tempt us themselves when we withdraw from human society, as they tempted the Lord in the desert' (*Car*. 2. 13, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 94; Palmer et al. 1981: 67). Maximus interprets the helpers given by God to the king of Babylon as demons who attack humans according to their specialization in evil (*Q.Thal*. 26, Laga–Steel 1980: 181). Elsewhere, he lists the three main thoughts (λογισμοί) of 'gluttony, avarice, and self-esteem' (*Car*. 3. 56, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 170; Palmer et al. 1981: 92). From these are born, respectively, unchastity, greed, and pride. 'All the rest—the thoughts of anger, resentment, rancor, listlessness, envy, backbiting, and so on—are consequent upon one of these three. These passions (πάθη), then, tie the intellect (νοῦς) to material things and drag it down to earth.' The terms 'thoughts' (λογισμοί) and 'intellect' (νοῦς), and the linking of demons to specific passions, remind one of Evagrius of Pontus, to whom Maximus owes many of his psychological insights. In *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity*, Brakke says the following:

> [T]o read Evagrius's demonology as an ancient and highly perceptive anticipation of modern psychology, as tempting as that might be, would be to attribute to Evagrius notions of repression, sublimation, and unconscious motives that he did not have. Still, we may understand that his strategies of naming thoughts, identifying the demons, and observing and analysing their methods gave monks a vocabulary and set of strategies that enabled them, in our terms, to talk about their feelings and to analyse them from a distance.
>
> (Brakke 2006: 77)

Repression as the blocking of painful memories, such as sexual abuse during childhood, is a modern notion that seems indeed not to be part of Maximus' psychology. In that sense his world differs much from that after Freud,

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who was described in 1939 by W. H. Auden thus: 'to us he is no more a person /now but a whole climate of opinion / under whom we conduct our different lives' (Auden 1976: 217). Were Maximus alive today, he would probably not dismiss a patient's struggle with demons as a mere metaphor or hallucination, as a post-Kantian psychologist might be inclined to do, but take it seriously as a real assault by the devil and pray for 'an angel sent by God' (*Q.Thal.* 52, Laga–Steel 1980: 425) to dispel the attacks. Maximus would probably find it odd that a curer of souls is anxious not to move beyond the frontiers of the phenomena into the noetic realm, a 'hidden world' (*Ep*. 1, PG 91. 389C) perceived by the *nous*, the spiritual or intuitive intellect (νοῦς), rather than the *logos* or discursive reason (λόγος). (I return to the psychic instruments νοῦς and (p. 536) λόγος in the next section.) Actually, Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), father of another school of depth psychology (analytical psychology), saw the death of metaphysics precipitated by Emmanuel Kant (1724–1804) as a reason to move from futile speculation about objects outside our human experience to one's self (Bakker 2012: 82). Moreover, Nicolaus (2011) shows that even the *Weltanschauung* of two men living in the same age and on the same continent—Carl Jung and Nikolai Berdyaev—may differ sharply. Since a human being with his or her thoughts, feelings, and longings basically functions the same as 1,400 years ago, it seems worthwhile to compare Maximus' analysis to that of modern psychologists.

Epistemological, Anthropological, and Mystagogical Background

The introduction has shown that psychology is closely bound up with epistemology and anthropology. In this section we will attempt to draw with rough strokes the intellectual and spiritual habitat of Maximus and identify his sources.

As the first source for Maximus' psychology, his own experience must be mentioned.[1] The *Centuries on Love* reveal an intimate knowledge about the workings of the human soul born from intense training (ἄσκησις) in praxis and contemplation (θεωρία). In his *Mystagogy*, he refers to the things 'mystically contemplated' by his unnamed spiritual elder (γέρων, *Myst.* Prol., Boudignon 2011: 4), but it is obvious that he is intimately acquainted with his subject. In *Q.Thal*. 60 he speaks with authority about two types of knowledge of which the latter is gained by experience:

> The scriptural Word knows of two kinds of knowledge of divine things. On the one hand there is relative knowledge, rooted only in reason and concepts (νοήμασιν), and lacking in the kind of experiential perception (αἴσθησιν) of what one knows through active engagement; such relative knowledge is what we use to order our affairs in our present life. On the other hand there is that truly authentic knowledge, gained only by actual experience, apart from reason or concepts, which provides a total perception of the known object through participation by grace.
>
> (Laga–Steel 1990: 77; trans. Bradshaw 2004: 192)

Bradshaw quotes this passage to illustrate how Maximus interprets Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite, 'the all-holy and truly divine interpreter' (*Myst.* Prol., Boudignon 2011: 4), who in his *Mystical Theology* sees the ascent of Moses up Mt. Sinai as the movement into the 'darkness of unknowing' (*Theol.myst.* 1. 3, Heil–Ritter 1991: 144). So for Maximus the 'truly authentic knowledge' is beyond concepts and knowing; this mystical knowledge (p. 537) is therefore not subject to objective scientific scrutiny.[2] Concerning the 'split between scientific and religious knowledge', Hardy observes:

> As a source of knowledge, mysticism is of course in opposition to the scientific mode—the empirical, testable, provable knowledge which is the currency of the modern Western world. Freud, Jung and Assagioli [the founder of the school of psychosynthesis], all medical doctors, trained in the scientific method, had to maintain the validity of their work against such opposition as that of Karl Popper and the criticism of 'closed systems' theory, and still are hardly regarded as respectable in the university system. Jung and Assagioli had the added 'disadvantage' of drawing on a spiritual awareness which they regarded as fundamental to their work.
>
> (Hardy 1987: 110)

Dionysius is among the limited number of sources Maximus mentions by name. An important quarry for his anthropology and psychology is Nemesius of Emesa's *On the Nature of Man*. While Nemesius explicitly names and

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compares the views of Galen, Aristotle, Plato, the Stoics, and other ancient authors, Maximus tacitly quotes him *in extenso* (*Amb.Io.* 10:44, PG 91. 1196C–1197D; Louth 1996: 148–50). The frequent use of the term ἕξις (see my introduction to this chapter) seems to have been inspired by reading Aristotle himself or a work other than *On the Nature of Man.* Another source, besides the already-mentioned Evagrius, which Maximus does not name, are the Macarian homilies (in whatever guise Maximus knew them). 'Maximus has used the Macarian understanding of the place of the heart to balance the primacy of the intellect found in Evagrius. This gives his anthropology a far more holistic quality. He has grounded Evagrian spirituality in the earth of a Macarian heart' (Plested 2004: 242). The term 'heart' is perhaps even more intangible and immeasurable than the word 'soul' (ψυχή) to modern academic psychologists. Central for Maximus remains human experience; in order to describe it, he eclectically uses sources and feels free to adapt concepts if needed.

In the quotation about the two types of knowledge above, Maximus uses the word 'perception' (αἴσθησις) in a positive sense, under the influence of the Macarian tradition it seems (see Plested 2004: 236–7). In passages dealing with ascetic praxis, however, Maximus presents αἴσθησις and αἰσθήσεις (senses) mostly in a negative light: his advice, for example, is to shut the senses (μύσας τὰς αἰσθήσεις, *Q.Thal*. 49, Laga–Steel 1980: 357) when the passions revolt. Typically, Maximus' approach is not to declare the latter type of αἴσθησις as bad per se, but to locate the tension between the two types at the level of intellect (νοῦς): 'When the intellect turns its attention to the visible world, it perceives things through the medium of the senses in a way that accords with nature. And the intellect is not evil, nor is its natural capacity to form conceptual images of things, nor are the things themselves, nor are the senses, for all are the work of God' (p. 538) (*Car*. 2. 15, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 96; trans. Palmer et al. 1981: 67). It all depends on the proper use (χρῆσις)[3] of the soul's natural powers and whether 'sense (αἴσθησιν) is ennobled by reason' (κατὰ λόγον, *Amb.Io.* 10: 3, PG 91. 1116D; Louth 1996: 102). In that case it is possible to discern the distinctly Maximian *logoi* of Creation (see Louth 2010):

> If the soul uses [χρήσαιτο] the senses properly, discerning by means of its own faculties the manifold inner principles (λόγους) of created beings, and if it succeeds in wisely transmitting to itself the whole visible universe in which God is hidden and proclaimed in silence, then by use of its own free choice [προαίρεσις] it creates a world of spiritual beauty within the understanding [διάνοια].
>
> (*Amb.Io*. 21, PG 91. 1248C; trans. Cooper 2005: 59)

In *Ambiguum* 10 Maximus explains that intellect, reason, and sense correspond to three motions of the soul and these bring him to one of his favourite triads: that of being, well-being, and eternal being. The two ways of being at the extremes are God's alone, while the middle one (well-being) depends on 'our inclination (γνώμη) and motion' (*Amb.Io.* 10: 3, PG 91. 1112D–1116B; trans. Louth 1996: 100–2). Here we encounter again the term γνώμη already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. This section of the *Ambiguum* alludes to the mediating role played by human beings between the sensible and the intelligible Creation (that is, the fourth division of being, on which see Thunberg 1995: 39–404). This suggests an upward motion towards the soul's cause, God, with the soul 'learning by sense (αἰσθήσει)' from below and 'grasping by intellection (νοήσει)' from above (*Opusc. de anima,* PG 91. 353D).

Perception by the senses (αἰσθήσεις) is situated at the border between body and soul, and this takes us to the body. As with perception (αἴσθησις), the sense organs (αἰσθήσεις, the term Maximus prefers to αἰσθητήρια) and the body in general are by nature good in Maximus' view; it all depends on how we use them. 'When [the soul] joins this transformed sensual operation on the one hand with the practice of virtue on the other, the whole soul/body composite becomes an agent of divine theophany' (Cooper 2005: 59; see *Amb.Io*. 21, PG 91. 1249C). Maximian anthropology follows Evagrius in substituting spirit (πνεῦμα) with intellect (νοῦς) in Paul's trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit (see Thunberg 1995: 107–13). The fourth chapter of the *Mystagogy*, entitled 'How and in what manner the holy church of God symbolically represents humankind and how it is represented by him as human', explains how we should picture the intellect as the supreme organ of the soul and thus of a human being (*Myst.*4, Boudignon 2011: 4).

What then is the place of reason (λόγος)? For Maximus, reason is the soul's organ for discursive reasoning. It is subservient to the intuitive and spiritual intellect (νοῦς): 'A pure intellect sees things correctly. A trained reason[4] puts them in order' (*Car*. 2.97, Palmer et al. 1981: 82). Maximus gives a more elaborate answer about the functioning of the pair in the following chapter of the *Mystagogy*, where he associates intellect with the (p. 539)

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contemplative power (θεωρητικόν) and reason with the active power (πρακτικόν) of the soul. The essences of intellect and reason need to manifest themselves progressively in, respectively, truth and goodness. The 'habit of contemplation' (θεωρητικὴ ἕξις) and the 'habit of action' (πρακτικὴ ἕξις) provide stability to the soul in its progression towards deification (*Myst.* 4, Boudignon 2011: 20–1).

Besides its association with νοῦς and αἴσθησις, *logos* in its sense of reason is associated with another group of three, that of reason, anger (θυμός), and desire (ἐπιθυμία) (e.g. *Q.Thal*. 5, Laga–Steel 1980: 65). More often Maximus refers to these psychic powers as 'desiring' (ἐπιθυμητικόν), 'incensive' (θυμικόν), and 'rational' (λογιστικόν). This tripartite division of the soul was formulated by Plato (*Republic* iv: 434D–441C) and on the whole accepted by the Greek Fathers (see Palmer et al. 1981: 380). The use of these natural—and therefore in Maximus' view fundamentally good—powers depends on a person's disposition: 'A soul's motivation is rightly ordered when its desiring power is subordinated to self-control, when its incensive power rejects hatred and cleaves to love, and when the power of reason, through prayer and spiritual contemplation, advances towards God' (*Car*. 4. 15, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 200; trans. Palmer et al. 1981: 102).

Plato's tripartite soul is part of a comparison between city and soul: 'But now the city was thought to be just because three natural kinds existing in it performed each its own function, and again it was sober, brave, and wise because of certain affections (πάθη) and habits (ἕξεις)[5] of these three kinds' (*Republic*, iv: 435B, trans. Shorey 1963: 377). Maximus uses the same metaphor when he compares Nineveh to the soul:[6]

> … the soul of each and every person to which, in its transgression, the word of God is sent preaching repentance unto life (cf. Jon 3:1–4). In turn we may interpret the *king* of that *city*, or soul, as the intellect (νοῦς) and its captains as the soul's innate faculties. The *men*, then, signify impassioned thoughts (λογισμούς), the *cattle* movements of the desiring faculty in relation to the body, the oxen covetous functions of the incensive faculty towards material objects, and the sheep the attempts of the senses to grasp sensible objects without intelligent reflection. So too the king is the intellect that arises, as from its throne, from the habitude (ἕξις) born of its former ignorance.
>
> (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 207; trans. Blowers–Wilken 2003: 155)

The intellect thus rules, or should rule, over its three psychic powers as a king commands his captains. Thunberg (1995: 260) discusses this arrangement in relation to the competing (and more Evagrian) set-up, where the intellect is closely associated with the rational power and thus a colleague of the ἐπιθυμητικόν and the θυμικόν.

To conclude this section, I would like to point to the mystagogical habitat from within which Maximus writes. This involves offering to God the correction of transgressions 'through true worship—I mean a humble disposition (διάθεσις)' (*Q.Thal.* 26, Laga–Steel 1980: 177). In its progression towards deification and mystical union, (p. 540) the soul passes through the three spiritual stages described in, amongst others, the *Mystagogy*: 'By means of the nave, representing the body, it proposes ethical philosophy, while by means of the sanctuary, representing the soul, it spiritually interprets natural contemplation, and by means of the intellect of the divine altar it manifests mystical theology' (*Myst.* 4, Boudignon 2011: 4).

The Horizontal Axis: Cognitive Therapy

In this section we will look at the parallels between Maximus' psychology and cognitive therapy. This does not involve deep mysticism with the intellect soaring beyond matter and reasoning, but rather the disciplined application of reason to one's own thoughts, opinions, and habits. Here one sees that Maximus and cognitive therapy mirror an ancient example: 'modern cognitive therapy has many things in common with Stoic therapy' (Sorabji 2000: 2).

It is part of the basic ascetical handiwork that is performed during the stages of ethical philosophy and natural contemplation mentioned in the previous section. We already saw that the soul needs its reasoning power to assess what the senses suggest to it. This process Maximus describes to Thalassius, who asks how to interpret King Hezekiah blocking off the water from the springs outside Jerusalem (2 Chr. 32: 2–4, *Q.Thal*. 49, Laga–Steel 1980: 351). His answer is that the springs should be interpreted as the senses, which should be closed when under demonic attack (see previous section). This is, of course, a very drastic response, like literally shutting yourself in

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your monastic cell.[7] Fortunately, his answer also describes how the psyche normally processes stimuli from outside. As was the case with Nineveh, the city is interpreted as the soul and the king as its spiritual intellect (νοῦς). Maximus identifies the three court officials as the three psychic powers. He describes how the soul produces knowledge out of sensible and intelligible input:

> The waters from outside the city—that is, outside the soul—which formed the river flowing through the city are the concepts (νοήματα) that, in the course of natural contemplation, are conveyed from the sensible object through every one of the senses and stream into the soul. By these waters, or notions, reason (λόγος) passes like a river through the city of the soul and achieves the knowledge of sensible things.
>
> (*Q.Thal*., Laga–Steel 1990: 355–6; trans. Blowers 1991: 175)

This image implies that the king should keep watch over what enters his city, if he does not completely restrict the 'stream of consciousness' (to use a phrase from literary (p. 541) criticism). This watchfulness (νῆψις) is described repeatedly by neptic Fathers such as Maximus.[8] It requires a rational and dispassionate attitude to detect and repel impassioned thoughts suggested by the devil. Elsewhere, however, Maximus seems to suggest that the danger is not only outside and that the king needs the impartial advice of the power of reason (λογιστικόν) to prevent him from becoming enamoured with his own thoughts. Moreover, sometimes he needs to call in an advisor from outside the city:

> Just as parents have a special affection for the children who are the fruit of their bodies, so the intellect naturally clings to its own thoughts. And just as to passionately fond parents their own children seem the most capable and most beautiful of all—though they may be the most ridiculous in every way—so to a foolish intellect its own thoughts appear the most intelligent of all, though they may be utterly degraded. The wise man does not regard his own thoughts in this way. It is precisely when he feels convinced that they are true and good he most distrusts his own judgment. He makes other wise men the judges of his own thoughts and arguments.
>
> (*Car*. 3. 58, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 200; trans. Palmer et al. 1981: 92)

Judgements about thoughts may be coloured by a high opinion about oneself, but also by the opinions of others and private opinions about other people and things. This truism is at the heart of cognitive therapy: 'The basic concept in the cognitive model affirms that the way people feel and behave stems not from a situation in itself, but from the way in which they interpret or construe that situation' (Trader 2011: 51). This suggests a parallel with Maximus' terms 'intention' or 'opinion' (γνώμη) and 'disposition' (διάθεσις), because we interpret similar situations in a similar way, and because our views and attitudes tend to be surprisingly stable.

As already said in my introduction, Maximus often uses the term 'habit' (ἕξις) when speaking of γνώμη and διάθεσις.[9] Habits seem to be short-cuts in the full process of willing which consists, according to Maximus, of more than ten steps a human being has to go through if he or she is to act fully rationally. The term διάθεσις occurs as one of the steps of the process of willing which Maximus describes to the deposed patriarch Pyrrhus during their theological disputation: 'This is called the faculty of will of the rational soul. It is according to this that we consider when willing, and in considering, we wish what we will. And when willing, we also inquire, examine, deliberate, judge, are disposed towards, choose, initiate, and use' (*DP*, PG 91. 293B–C). I would say that a habit (ἕξις) skips the steps of inquiry, examination, deliberation, and judgement, and goes straight to disposition (διάθεσις) or rather choice (of means: προαίρεσις).

Habits suggest unconscious processes taking place without a person really being aware of them, for example shifting gear while driving a car. While 'the psychoanalytic (p. 542) unconscious is, to most laypeople and those in the arts and the humanities, the only unconscious', Uleman (2005: 4) compared its 'primary metaphor of a hydraulic system with various fluid (drives, energy) seeking discharge (pleasure) and being channeled or blocked by defenses or sublimations' to the metaphor of a computer associated with the 'cognitive unconscious'. The latter concept of the unconscious was introduced in 1987 in an essay by Kihlstrom describing:

> [T]he ways in which the computer as metaphor formed the basis for increasingly complex conceptions of human mental processes … Unlike the psychoanalytic unconscious, it has no innate drives that seek gratification without regard to constraints of reality and society. In fact it is rather cold, apparently rational,

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> and amotivational, compared to the heat and irrationality of psychoanalytic drives and conflicts.
>
> (Uleman 2005: 5)

How then to adjust faulty ('maladaptive') thinking and habits? The answer of cognitive therapy is to become aware of your trains of thought by a cold analysis as if you were a computer programme:

> In cognitive theory, metacognition refers to 'thought about a thought' in which a person examines and evaluates his personal theories and hypotheses about himself, others, and his world, thereby regulating his core schemata, assumptions, and rules. Beck views metacognition as a cognitive system designed to consciously control and sometimes override primitive thinking that characterizes the rest of the animal kingdom.
>
> (Trader 2011: 109)

Consciousness of a hidden opinion and its accompanying thoughts and feelings comes about when a client forces him- or herself—or rather is forced by the therapist—to analyse hidden inner processes. The most important step in becoming conscious of one's 'schemata' is probably the decision to go into therapy, that is, the realization that one needs help.

The Greek word that comes closest to being an equivalent of consciousness is to my mind συναίσθησις, related to the term αἴσθησις discussed above. Galen, Aristotle, and Nemesius use it in a medical context (suffering from a πάθος), and Plotinus in the sense of self-awareness. The attacks of demons and the suffering from involuntary (ἀκούσια) misfortunes lead according to Maximus to συναίσθησις, as does becoming aware of one's previous mistakes and accepting 'voluntarily (ἑκουσίως) the yoke of the king of Babylon' (*Q.Thal*. 26, Laga–Steel 1980: 177).

To conclude this section, it is good to remind ourselves of the goal of our ascetic endeavours: love, defined by Maximus as 'a good disposition (διάθεσις) of the soul' (*Car.* 1. 1). It is the result of obeying the scriptural law (associated with natural contemplation, the second spiritual stage), which turns 'fear (of punishment) into a disposition (διάθεσις) slowly but surely strengthened by deliberate willing (γνώμη) of the good. It turns their customary behaviour into a (permanent) habitude (ἕξις) purged by the forgetting of their former ways, and simultaneously engenders the love of others' (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 235; trans. Blowers–Wilken 2003: 168).

(p. 543) The Vertical Axis: Depth Psychology and the Unconscious

Let us start this section with an example of consciousness (συναίσθησις) that is the result of an experience belonging to the third and final spiritual stage, that of mystical theology:

> When the intellect is ravished through love by divine knowledge and stands outside the realm of created beings, it becomes aware of God's infinity. It is then, according to Isaiah, that a sense of amazement makes it conscious of its own lowliness and in all sincerity it repeats the prophet's words: *How abject I am, for I am pierced to the heart; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts* (Isa. 6: 5).
>
> (*Car*. 1: 12, Ceresa-Gastaldo 1963: 54; trans. Palmer et al. 1981: 54)

The psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908–70) would probably identify this as a 'peak experience'. He, along with William James (1842–1910) and the already mentioned Roberto Assagioli, were pioneers of what is now called transpersonal psychology (Rowan 2005: 27–47). The ideas of Maslow, such as his 'hierarchy of needs', have been criticized for their lack of scientific rigour. Why then do his and other more 'esoteric' theories appeal to the modern human being, who also tries to be a rational creature? To my mind, this apparent schizophrenia stems from a deep desire not be irrational but rather to be 'hyperrational', to use the favourite prefix *hyper* (beyond) of Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite. Mystical theology, the 'darkness of unknowing', beyond reason (λόγος) and even intellect (νοῦς), beckons. It seems natural to associate this 'darkness of unknowing' with the 'supraconscious' mentioned in my introduction. Assagioli also calls it the 'superconscious' or 'higher unconscious': 'From this region we receive our higher intuitions and inspirations—artistic, philosophical or scientific, ethical "imperatives" and urges to

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humanitarian and heroic action' (Assagioli 1980: 17). Using the term 'heart' of the Macarian tradition, also used by Maximus instead of νοῦς (see *Q.Thal*. 5, Laga–Steel 1980: 65), the modern γέρων Kallistos Ware gives the following description:

> The heart includes what we today tend to describe as 'the unconscious'. The heart, that is to say, includes those aspects of myself which I do not as yet understand, the potentialities within myself of which I am at present largely unaware … we may say that the heart is open both below and above, to the abyss of the subconscious below; above, to the abyss of mystical supraconscious, below to the forces of evil; above, to the Divine Light.
>
> (cited in Nicolaus 2011: 24)

If we combine this with Maximus' interpretation of the Last Supper's upper room, also mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, we end up with a house with a cellar and an attic as a metaphor for the soul with, respectively, its lower and higher unconscious. (p. 544) While Ware has a negative view of the cellar, Stăniloae, in a typically Maximian fashion, does not regard the lower unconscious as evil by nature. The energies below, however, need to be balanced by the forces of the 'upper room of the soul'. By calling them 'psychic energies of desire and anger' he makes a tacit reference to the ἐπιθυμητικόν and θυμικόν (Stăniloae 2002: 100).

Ware referred to the subconscious and superconscious within human beings as abysses. Similarly, Maximus compares the abyss of the intellect (νοῦς) to the abyss of God in *Amb.Io.*, where he explains a passage from Gregory Nazianzen quoting Psalm 41: 8 (LXX = TM 42: 7) ('Abyss calls to abyss in the noise of your cataracts'):

> Every intellect (νοῦς), because of its invisible nature and the depth and multitude of its thoughts, is to be compared to an abyss, since it passes beyond the ordered array of the phenomena and comes to the place of intelligible reality. Or again, when in faith by the vehemence of its movement it passes beyond what is fitting, and comes to rest in itself, in every way fixed and unmoved, because it has passed beyond everything, then it necessarily calls upon the divine wisdom, which to the understanding is really and truly the unfathomable abyss.
>
> (*Amb.Io.* 71, PG 91. 1408D–1409A; trans. Louth 1996: 164)

While there is no equivalent for the psychoanalytic unconscious in Maximus, one might see a parallel in ignorance. On the one hand, it is clearly a sin: 'The darkness of ignorance and the unimaginable depth of evil have come over human nature like an abyss, and the mountains of error—meaning "the spirits of wickedness" (Eph. 6: 12)—have rooted themselves on it.' (*Q.Thal*. 64, Laga–Steel 1990: 193; Blowers–Wilken 2003: 148). On the other hand, we have the darkness of unknowing which Maximus associates with the latest stage of spiritual life, mystical theology.

Maximus in Dialogue with Modern Psychology

Imagine if Maximus the Confessor were to visit our present world and age.[10] At first, he would undoubtedly be in awe of the technological progress, the advances in medicine, etc. He would probably avidly read handbooks of neuropsychology, cognitive therapy, and the behavioural sciences, the successors of Nemesius' *On the Nature of Man*, and draw from them useful insights and techniques. His basic view of the human being's inner cosmos and his place in the macro-cosmos, however, would probably stay the same. Becoming more acquainted with the modern human being, he would probably be appalled by the little spiritual progress made, the addictions and depressions, despite all (p. 545) the affluence available. As Paul did on the Areopagus, he would perhaps try to adapt his language to appeal to an audience not well versed in the Old and New Testaments, blind to symbolism, and ignorant of his mystagogical habitat. His pedagogical style, however, would probably also stay the same, attempting to draw the other into the mystery of the *logoi* of Creation. Rather than Maximus descending into polemics as with the deposed patriarch Pyrrhus, I imagine him more than willing to address questions and engage in a dialogue with modern psychology. Many topics remain to be explored: his teaching about the human will, the personal *logos* of a human being and how to discern it, and his lists of λογισμοί/πάθη in relation to the latest version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM-5,* American Psychiatric Association 2013), to name but a few.

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Suggested Reading

A fundamental work on Maximian psychology remains Thunberg 1995. The various schools of modern psychology have produced a plethora of books. Browsing through *DSM-5* (American Psychiatric Association 2013) gives an impression of psychopathology according to a coalition of mental health professionals, insurers, and the pharmaceutical industry. Hardy 1987 is recommended as a guide to a type of psychology that has a more holistic view of human beings that is more compatible with Maximus' teachings. Cooper 2005, Nicolaus 2011, Trader 2011, Chirban 2012, and Bakker 2013 are examples of attempts to bring modern psychology into dialogue with the church Fathers.

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(p. 547) Trader, A. (2011), *Ancient Christian Wisdom and Aaron Beck's Cognitive Therapy: A Meeting of Minds* (New York: Peter Lang).

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Notes:

([1]) See Louth 1996: 25 on the Macarian Homilies as inspiration for the importance Maximus attributes to experience. See also Miquel 1966 on experience and Maximus' epistemology.

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([2]) Cf. Uleman 2005: 5: '[T]he psychoanalytic unconscious is widely acknowledged to be a failure as a scientific theory because evidence of its major components cannot be observed, measured precisely, or manipulated easily. The theory's complexity renders it largely unfalsifiable.'

([3]) See Bradshaw 2004: 3, where he discusses the use of χρῆσις, ἕξις, and ἐνέργεια by Plato and Aristotle.

([4]) Palmer et al. 1981 consistently translate *logos* as 'intelligence'. I have modifed the translation by changing all instances of 'intelligence' to 'reason'.

([5]) Shorey 1963: 377 n.(c), notes that: 'ἕξεις is here almost the Aristotelian ἕξις.'

([6]) Palmer's translation of νοῦς as 'the psychic powers' (Palmer et al. 1981) has been modified to 'intellect'. Italics indicate quotations from Jonah 3; I have added in brackets the key Greek words.

([7]) I used this while working as a chaplain with a prisoner struggling with his alcohol addiction. I suggested he shut off his television set, instead of being bombarded with images of people drinking happily, when his demons attacked him during the long evenings in his prison cell. Using Maximus' metaphor, I asked him who was sitting on the throne of his city, which made him think very deeply.

([8]) Cf. the full title of the *Philokalia*, in which Maximus takes up more space than any of the other authors in this collection.

([9]) Aristotle, in whose virtue ethics habit plays an important role, says in the fourth book of his *Metaphysics* that one of the senses of ἕξις is διάθεσις (Ross 1958: vol. 1, 1022b).

([10]) For a similar thought experiment involving Plato, see Assagioli 2002: 3–4.

Michael Bakker

Michael Bakker is director of the Amsterdam Centre for Eastern Orthodox Theology (ACEOT) at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a deacon in the Russian Orthodox Church.

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Maximus the Confessor and Ecumenism

A. Edward Siecienski

The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor
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Abstract and Keywords

Maximus' writings on the papacy received increasing attention in the twentieth century, especially as both Catholic and Orthodox hierarchs discussed the issues of primacy and conciliarity in the undivided church. As with the procession of the Holy Spirit, ongoing study has revealed that Maximus challenges both the traditional Roman and Orthodox views on the papacy—that is, that Rome has complete universal jurisdiction or that she possesses merely a 'primacy of honour'—offering, perhaps, a more balanced view. This chapter documents the use of Maximus' writings, especially those on the *filioque* and the papacy, and how they have contributed to modern ecumenical dialogue. Maximus, it would seem, has once again become the great mediator, the great bridge-builder, between East and West, a role he played in his own lifetime and a role he continues to play in theology today.

Keywords: Primacy, conciliarity, papacy, filioque, procession, Holy Spirit, Catholic church, Orthodox church, ecumenism

A. Edward Siecienski

A. Edward Siecienski is Associate Professor of Religion and Pappas Professor of Byzantine Culture and Religion at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

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Reception of Maximian Thought in the Modern Era

Joshua Lollar

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter focuses on the reception of the thought of St Maximus the Confessor in the twentieth century. The major locus of this reception occurred within the realm of historical theology, and so the bulk of this chapter addresses the monumental works on Maximus by Sergei Epifanovich, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Polycarp Sherwood, Walther Völker, and Lars Thunberg, all of which served to shape the trajectories of Maximian retrieval in the twentieth century. Indeed, while many other very important works could be considered, these here mentioned represent decisive moments in the scholarly conversation, and orient our understanding of the scope and range of Maximus scholarship in the twentieth century. The chapter concludes with a look forward to the twenty-first century and identifies necessities and possibilities for further research on Maximus.

Keywords: Sergei Epifanovich, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Polycarp Sherwood, Walther Völker, Lars Thunberg, Maximian retrieval, reception history

THE major locus of the reception of Maximus the Confessor's thought has occurred within the realm of historical theology, and so the bulk of this chapter addresses the monumental works on Maximus by Sergei Leontevich Epifanovich, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Polycarp Sherwood, Walther Völker, and Lars Thunberg, all of which served to shape the trajectories of Maximus scholarship in the twentieth century. Indeed, while many other very important works could be considered,[1] these here mentioned represent decisive moments in the scholarly conversation, and orient our understanding of the scope and range of Maximus scholarship in the twentieth century. I shall conclude with a look forward to the twenty-first century and identify some necessary questions for further research on Maximus.

With the exception of Epifanovich, my treatment here focusses on the work of western scholars. The major scholarly contributions to Maximus research in the twentieth century have come primarily from the western academy, and so these contributions merit our attention in this chapter. Works on Maximus from the eastern Christian world are considered in Louth 2015, Benevich 2015, and Khoperia 2015. The inclusion of Epifanovich here is justified, I think, by the strong resonance his synthetic reading of Maximus has with the other works considered in this chapter, the earliest of which his study predates by some twenty-five years. Indeed, Epifanovich anticipates many of the questions asked and approaches taken by later scholars and does so with remarkable concision and masterful handling of the sources. Thus, we begin with one of the earliest of the twentieth-century's systematic treatments of Maximus' thought (p. 565) as a whole, Epifanovich's *Venerable Maximus the Confessor and Byzantine Theology* (Epifanovich 1996).

Epifanovich: Maximus the Confessor and the Essence of Byzantine Culture

For Epifanovich, Maximus' way of thinking is only understandable within the context of sixth- and seventh-century Byzantium, the 'native soil' from which Maximus' spirit sprang forth. One must, says Epifanovich, not only present a

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systematic account of Maximus' teachings, but also lay bare his sources. It is only in this way that the inner structure of Maximus' thought may be discerned. This assertion, which any scholar of historical theology would take for granted, is not for Epifanovich simply the obvious practice of giving historical context as one would do for any topic of historical research; rather, the early Byzantine era had as its deepest aspiration the unification of all aspects of Hellenic genius—philosophy, spiritual culture, art, law—and it found in Maximus a 'spokesman for the striving of his age' (Epifanovich 1996: 14). Thus, to study Maximus 'in context', with a mind to uncovering his sources and understanding the problems of his age, is to acquire a glimpse of the subjective consciousness of early Byzantine culture as a whole. As a summation and synthesis of what came before, Maximus is exemplary of the genius of his age, when the tradition of the Fathers coalesced in the form in which it would be passed on to the world of Byzantine Orthodoxy. The flow of Maximus' thought, then, can only be discerned by following the various streams that fed into it.

The sixth century saw the closing of the Academy in Athens, an event that was emblematic of the waning of pagan influence in the official channels of Byzantine life. For Epifanovich, this waning of pagan culture meant that the preservation of the Greek genius was left to the Christian church, which received the converted culture largely intact, adding its own distinctive religious colouring to the realms of Greek art, science, and law. Indeed, it was ascetically rigorous religiosity that characterized the new culture of Byzantium, and the church became the centre of cultural life. The state and church would become engulfed by a common world of politics; monasticism, which would be the milieu of Maximus' formation and major works, expanded from the deserts and into the heart of Byzantine life; philosophy found nourishment in the theological debates of the day; art developed within the context of Christian liturgy and iconography.

While paganism died as an official cultural force in the sixth century, Greek culture and the genius of its spirit lived on, transplanted, as it were, into the new Christian soil. This approach to the matter is significant for understanding Epifanovich's views on Maximus' relationship to the philosophical, as well as to the theological, traditions he inherited. To be 'Greek' was not necessarily to be 'pagan', and so the core of (p. 566) Greek identity, the brilliance of its spiritual striving, could live on undiminished when deprived of its 'pagan' body and could grow into the new form of Byzantine Christian culture.

According to Epifanovich, it was Maximus who finally brought this Greek genius into its mature form as 'Byzantine theology'. As a theologian–philosopher, ascetic–mystic, and polemicist, Maximus gathered every branch of Byzantine theology and creatively produced a unified and integrated system. This gathering and systematizing of the various strands of tradition were precisely the fruit of Maximus' 'original spirit', and are what separated him from what Epifanovich takes to be Maximus' barren and relatively insignificant 'theologian-excerpter' contemporaries, among whom, we might add, some of Maximus' early twentieth-century interpreters tended to number the Confessor himself.

For Epifanovich, Maximus was 'the ripe fruit of Byzantine culture' (1996: 50) in that he combined asceticism with a coherent intellectual system on the one hand, and with mysticism on the other. He combined the collective witness of authoritative Fathers, preeminently Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite and the Cappadocians, and worked out his own vision by means of constant engagement with their texts. Maximus stands as the culmination of the patristic theological, ascetical, and mystical tradition, a tradition that provided Maximus with all the material for his worldview, but which required his synthetic creativity to become fully formed.

When Epifanovich speaks of Maximus' 'system' or ' worldview', he means the inner coherence of his thought and not any systematic articulation made by Maximus himself, for Epifanovich finds the relatively *un*-systematic presentation of Maximus' works to be one of his weaknesses as a theologian. Nevertheless, despite the often fragmentary and suggestive nature of Maximus' writings, Epifanovich discerns the 'organic integrity' (1996: 52) of his vision at every point, and the student who would endure the struggle of understanding him will be repaid in full with a clear and unshakeable vision of the profundity and grandeur of his thought.

While Maximus is the figure who successfully united the ascetical and mystical with the speculative, theological, and philosophical, Epifanovich reads Maximus fundamentally as an ascetic-mystic for whom dogma is motivated by and imbued with ascetical and mystical striving, and in this way he captured the deeply religious spirit with which Epifanovich characterizes Byzantine culture as a whole. On the side of speculative theology and philosophy, which, again, are grounded not in an indubitable experience of rational consciousness (Epifanovich mentions

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Descartes' *cogito*) but in the hiddenness of inner mystical experience, the theological and the philosophical are not set at odds with one another; neither are the contents of the faith 'rationalized' by philosophy. Rather, philosophy is 'absorbed by faith' (1996: 53), and the views of scripture are given precedence over the views of Greek philosophy, which Maximus uses eclectically and as an aid to the contemplation of nature. While he may use terminology from the schools of Greek thought, he received them as mediated through a developed tradition of Christian philosophy, and the sources of his system remained the Bible and the doctrine of Christ.

(p. 567) For Epifanovich, it is mystical, not rational, cognition that holds sway in Maximus' epistemology. The essences of things escape the grasp of the created mind, they transcend reason and intellect, and so it is faith that leads to the immediate mystical experience of reality, not reason. This is all preparatory to the knowledge of God, who is beyond the unknowability of created things and is approached by the apophatic theology of Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite, which leads to the saint's unity with God. This unity is shown most clearly in the Incarnation of Christ. Epifanovich makes use of the Palamite notion of 'divine energies', which he equates with Maximus' *logoi* (ideas), to account for human cognition of the Divine in the person of Christ, the *Logos* (Word). It is the illumination of these *logoi* that makes knowledge of and speech about the Divine possible.

Epifanovich goes on to synthesize the kataphatic aspects of Maximus' thought concerning the Trinity, Creation, providence, and judgement, and in the course of his exposition he is careful to point out Maximus' rejection of a pantheistic eternal emanationism and his insistence on the grounding of the Creation of the world in the personal will of God. Epifanovich covers the basic outlines of Maximus' understanding of the manifestation of the *Logos* in the *logoi*, the intellectually and sensually differentiated hierarchy of being, anthropology, the Fall of human beings, and the divine economy of salvation, which is revealed in the sacramental life of the church and in ascetical practice. He describes the three-fold path of spiritual practice—practical, natural, and theological philosophy—along with the mystical interpretation of scripture. These diverse elements of Maximus' system are bound together, on Epifanovich's reading, by the notion of the divine Origin of all things, the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the practice of asceticism. Indeed, he sees in Maximus the first thoroughgoing application of the doctrine of the Incarnation to every aspect of thought and life. In Maximus, Epifanovich sees the last pure and clear expression of the church's faith, a faith centred on the incarnate Christ, grounded upon the scriptures, and experienced in ascetical striving and mystical encounter. It is this form of religious life that Maximus would bequeath to Byzantium and beyond it to the Orthodox Church.

Epifanovich was a man of the Russian Orthodox Church, a church that has historically invigorated the empire that saw itself as the heir of Byzantium, as the Third Rome. From the tradition that the Apostle Andrew, first bishop and patron of Byzantium, travelled to what would be the site of Kiev, to the legend of the white cowl, a gift from Constantine to the bishop of Rome that made its way from Rome to Constantinople and then to Novgorod, Russian Orthodoxy has sought to assert its destiny as bearer of Christian culture and heir of the Byzantine synthesis of religion and life, as the heir of the genius of Hellenism. The untimely death, therefore, on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution, of Sergei Leontevich Epifanovich, a man known for his piety and ascetical life—'a monk in secular clothes', as some called him—who sought, in his way, to emulate the Byzantine synthesis he discerned in Maximus and which he saw as the Russian church's inheritance, is not without a certain poignancy.

(p. 568) Hans Urs von Balthasar: The Cosmic Synthesis of Maximus' Thought

The year 1941 saw the publication of Hans Urs von Balthasar's remarkable *Kosmische Liturgie*. The original subtitle of the work was *Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbildes bei Maximus Confessor* (*Apex and Crisis of the Greek Image of the Universe in Maximus the Confessor*). Von Balthasar modified the sub-title in the expanded, second edition (von Balthasar 1961) to *Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners*, reflecting his response to criticism, primarily by Polycarp Sherwood (see the section entitled 'Polycarp Sherwood: Maximus as Paradigm of Byzantine Theology'), that he had made too much of a so-called 'Origenist crisis' in the thought of Maximus, a crisis that supposedly provoked a sharp turn in the thought of the Confessor and a repudiation of the Origenism he had inherited from the intellectualist monastic tradition. Von Balthasar changed the title and reworked some of the contents, he said, to clarify his intentions and present the basic intuition of his work 'in a more positive light' (von Balthasar 2003: 25).

After completing his doctoral thesis on the trajectory of German thought in modernity (*Apokalypse der deutschen*

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Seele), von Balthasar, who had by this time entered the Society of Jesus, undertook a series of studies of the Greek Fathers, publishing works on Origen, Evagrius, Gregory of Nyssa, and on the scholia to the *Areopagitica*. This work culminated in his study of Maximus, and not simply in the sense of the completion of a research agenda: von Balthasar saw in Maximus the culmination of the patristic tradition.

Of all the twentieth-century's works on Maximus, questions of method and scope are most significant in von Balthasar's *Cosmic Liturgy*. In the forward to the second edition of *Cosmic Liturgy*, von Balthasar states that he has no intention of giving a 'historically neutral overview' of Maximus' life and works; rather, he will try 'to grasp intuitively, and to make visible, the shape of his ideas' (2003: 25). This will lead von Balthasar not only to rigorous attention to the details of Maximus' texts but also to a constant invocation of modern philosophical issues, especially as they are posed by Hegel, about which we shall say more below. Von Balthasar's *Cosmic Liturgy* presents us both with a picture of Maximus' thought and a model of what constructive, creative—some would say 'a-historical'—patristic research might look like.

For von Balthasar, Maximus is the place where the balance of the patristic tradition—to borrow an image from Pavel Florensky (1997: 43)—hits zero. He represents the perfect equilibrium of the many possibilities that came down to him from the tradition. On the metaphysical scale, all Maximus' thinking turns on the union of God and the world, of the eternal and the temporal, the infinite and the finite in the *hypostasis* of the incarnate Christ. In the world of history and culture, Maximus is the mediator between East and West, East (Asia) in this case meaning the ecstatic striving for dissolution in the Absolute, which amounts, for von Balthasar, to an impersonal and pantheistic spiritualism, and West referring to the Bible but also to the traditions of Greece and Rome, where (p. 569) all is personal encounter, willing, free, positive confrontation. The East is 'religious passion' making its way through nature to the sublime; the West is personal commitment to a personal Divinity that reveals itself. It is Maximus who maintains the 'religious passion' of Asia (von Balthasar 2003: 46), which was given to him by Origen, but focusses it all on the person of Christ, so that eastern desires for divinization (θέωσις) and western regard for the integrity of the human are held together in the Incarnation.

Within Christendom, Maximus is also the great mediator between East and West, East here meaning Byzantium and those under its cultural sway, and West meaning Rome. Maximus is fully Greek/eastern in his approach to theology, spirituality, sexuality (to von Balthasar's dismay), and asceticism, and yet his ecclesial loyalties were clearly with Rome once the Greek church showed its predilection for monoenergist and monothelite doctrine. Moreover, this option for Rome was Maximus' assertion of the freedom of the church from worldly power. On von Balthasar's reading, therefore, Maximus was the central figure of seventh-century church life, for he expressed in word and deed the wealth of the Greek patristic tradition and the unity of the church in Rome.

Narrowing further still, within the Christian East, Maximus mediates, unifies, and ultimately transcends the divide between Alexandria and Antioch in that, in his thinking, the integrity of the human is preserved precisely by its union, without confusion, with the Divine. Even within what von Balthasar takes to be the Alexandrian orientation, Maximus unites the gnostic elements of Evagrius to the sacramental symbolism of the Areopagite's liturgy. Maximus represents how Origen, the Cappadocians, Evagrius, Dionysius, and also the Antiochene tradition may be read as within the catholic consciousness of the church. Dionysius can be (mis-)read as a pantheist, Origen as too Asiatic, Evagrius as nearly a Buddhist. But in Maximus, von Balthasar sees their correction, 'defanging' (in the case of Origen), and ultimate vindication and incorporation into the tradition of the Great Church.

It is all these acts of mediation and synthesis that constitute Maximus' creative genius. He was for von Balthasar, as he was for Epifanovich, an 'heir' of the tradition, not simply a compiler. Heirs receive the property of their forebears as their own and increase it if they know how. This Maximus certainly did know, and he stands not as a passive recipient but as a theological artist who, working with the traditional materials available to all, created something reflective of his own unique vision. Maximus is also von Balthasar's lodestone for ancient Greek philosophy. His thoroughly Christian vision attracts the spiritual energy of the Platonists, the conceptual rigour of the Aristotelians, and the Stoics' deep trust of nature, and draws them into his overall synthesis.

Von Balthasar also draws Maximus forward into contact with later figures, especially Thomas Aquinas and Hegel. There are many places in which von Balthasar hears an anticipation of Thomas, particularly in his use of Aristotle, his trust in the goodness of natural motion, his understanding of the analogy of being, and his views on the soul and body. Once again we might say that Maximus represents a possibility for how Thomas can be read in a way

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that fulfils the scholastic's desire for conceptual rigour, but not at the expense of transcendent spiritual life.

(p. 570) The question of Hegel is a more complicated one and requires more comment. Von Balthasar opens the second edition of *Cosmic Liturgy* by making reference to a nineteenth-century study of Eriugena that had as its theological aim the uprooting of 'the pantheism of Hegel' (2003: 29), and throughout his text von Balthasar seems always to be ready to give an answer inspired by Maximus to Hegel, whether in agreement or disagreement. We have seen that von Balthasar's studies of the Greek Fathers were preceded by his study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German intellectual culture, and the threat, as well as the promise, of German romanticism and idealism animates his engagement with Maximus throughout. It is as though von Balthasar tacitly acknowledges his (our) need for the spiritual (*geistlich*) energy of the idealists, just as he acknowledges the place of what he calls 'Asia' (2003: 45–7) in Maximus' thought, and yet also sees in this energy, with its potential to sacrifice the reality of Creation to its desire for dissolution in the Absolute, the great danger to the integrity of the Christian faith.

Moreover, there appears to be in von Balthasar the assumption that we are unable today to hear words such as 'synthesis', and concepts such as 'unity', 'whole', 'difference', 'universal', and 'particular', which are to be found on nearly every page of Maximus' texts, in a way that does not begin to stream towards the ocean of Hegel's thought. However, he might say, to follow the stream all the way, to allow the concepts to be determined by Hegel, is to fall away from the Christian vindication of the finite, creation, difference, and distance, and into the abyss of Hegel's idealistic, agonistic pantheism. Thus, it is essential for the overarching project of von Balthasar's thought that he draw this language away from Hegel and re-inscribe it within Maximus' thoroughly Christian framework.

The obvious criticism of von Balthasar is that of anachronism, and while historically trained scholars of patristics are, perhaps, obligated to sound this word of caution, it should be noted that von Balthasar characterizes Maximus' style of thought as being itself 'unhistorical' (2003: 101) and so perhaps feels licensed to read him across centuries. Secondly, von Balthasar regards Maximus as the progenitor of German idealism via Eriugena and so the arguments with Hegel may be seen to be long-standing family disputes. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, von Balthasar, more than any other twentieth-century scholar surveyed here, assimilates his theological style in *Cosmic Liturgy* (and indeed throughout his works) to that of Maximus: *Cosmic Liturgy* is a much more systematic, but no less creative, interpretation of Maximus, which corresponds in its way to Maximus' own *Ambigua*, which wrestle with the difficult thought and language of Gregory the Theologian and Ps-Dionysius, wherein the part of Hegel is played by Origen (as overly-systematized by the 'Origenists'). *Cosmic Liturgy* is Maximian in spirit and, while we must be cautious with von Balthasar's readings, especially as they are framed by Hegel, or Thomas, or by questions arising from the twentieth century, we should be equally cautious with ready dismissals and charges of anachronism lest we miss an essential component of von Balthasar's interpretation of Maximus, namely, his performance of him. As a great conductor, to modify slightly one of von Balthasar's own images, conducts a work of a master composer with his own orchestra, his own phrasing, his own interpretation, and just as this interpretation takes on new meanings (p. 571) depending upon what time and history present to the music at the moment of its performance, so too does von Balthasar's performance of Maximus express von Balthasar's own personal rhythm and habits of thought without thereby being necessarily invalid.

Unsurprisingly, given the breadth of his interests and the reach of his interpretation of Maximus, von Balthasar's reading has been very influential, both within the field of patristics and without. One particularly interesting place this influence can be felt is in the work of the French phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion. The themes of distance and difference, which figure prominently in von Balthasar's reading of Maximus, are important themes in Marion's early works *The Idol and Distance* (1977) and *God Without Being* (1982)—he mentions von Balthasar explicitly in these works—as well as in his later work, *The Erotic Phenomenon* (2003), where it is distance or difference that secures the possibility for love. Von Balthasar's thoroughly Chalcedonian approach to reality, which he learns from Maximus, also finds voice in *The Erotic Phenomenon*, where lovers unite 'without confusion or mixing … without separation or division' (Marion 2007: 127). These works of Marion present one example of the potential fruitfulness of von Balthasar's approach, and represent an extension of his project of allowing the patristic tradition to speak in the present.

Polycarp Sherwood: Maximus as Paradigm of Byzantine Theology

Polycarp Sherwood provides an appropriately rigorous and formidable foil to the style of von Balthasar. It was

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Sherwood's criticisms of the first edition of *Cosmic Liturgy* that, in part, led von Balthasar to revise it in 1961, and Sherwood himself, in a review of Maximus scholarship, identified his own approach to studying Maximus—in contrast to von Balthasar, who is 'audaciously creative'—as seeking to understand the Confessor within the context of his own tradition, that of the earlier Greek Fathers and the culture of Byzantium (Sherwood 1964: 432–4).

Sherwood was responsible for what has been (until now; see Jankowiak and Booth 2015) the standard chronological ordering of Maximus' works (1952), an overview of Maximus' doctrine and English translations of *LA* and *Car.* (1955a), and a monograph on the question of Origenism in Maximus' *Amb.Io.* (1955b).

In his interpretation of Maximus' teaching in the introduction to his translations of the *LA* and *Car.*, Sherwood builds his general description upon his view that Maximus is fundamentally an ascetical and mystical writer, that he is unconcerned with the bare intellectual aspects of philosophical or theological speculation 'simply as a development of truth', but rather is intent upon contemplating reality as it actually is: directed towards union with God in deification (1955a: 28). He thus organizes his account around the doctrines of God, the human being, and deification. Sherwood's account is thus ultimately christological.

(p. 572) In his account of Maximus' doctrine of God, Sherwood raises the question of the relationship between Maximus and the later Palamite distinction between essence and energies and also, von Balthasar's protestations notwithstanding, discerns in Maximus the possibility of finding vestiges of the Holy Trinity in the created order. Here Maximus takes (and in some cases corrects, with respect to Evagrius) the teachings of Evagrius and Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite to forge his own expression of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is, as it is in Ps-Dionysius, always hymnic. Sherwood accounts for Maximus' support of the Latin *Filioque* by noting that Maximus does not understand this as an assertion of two divine causes, but rather takes procession from the Son really to be procession 'through' the Son. The focus here is on the unity of essence of the Holy Trinity. Thus, in his own way, Sherwood places Maximus between East and West, as a possible supporter both of Palamism and of the more characteristically Latin approach to the doctrine of the Trinity.

With respect to Maximus' anthropology, while Sherwood separates theology and anthropology as distinct fields of inquiry, he asserts that Maximus' doctrine of the human being cannot be understood as separate from his theology since 'everything, especially man', is considered by Maximus in terms of its beginning (ἀρχή) and end (τέλος), which is God, and thus his anthropology finds its consummation in the doctrine of deification. With respect to the composition of the human being as soul and body, Sherwood thinks that Maximus has presented Christian thought with something new, for by denying that the body and soul are in themselves complete substances, Maximus assures the unity of the human being, body and soul, in a way that does not rely upon an Aristotelian notion of form and matter, which, according to Sherwood, was too materialistic for Christian thought. It also secures the senses (along with marriage and sexuality) in their appropriate place as created good by God, even though, in Adam, they must be controlled by asceticism for the sake of the manifestation of virtue.

As I have noted, the related doctrines of God and humankind come to fulfilment for Sherwood in Maximus' doctrine of deification, which is the content of salvation by grace in Christ. This fulfilment is achieved by the Holy Spirit working in the church; Sherwood found von Balthasar's account to be deficient on this point, especially with respect to the sacraments. Through participation in the sacraments, preeminently baptism and the Eucharist, the techniques of asceticism—which are not, according to Sherwood, separated from the sacramental life of the church in Maximus' thought—prayer and contemplation, and finally the realization of the ecstasy of love, the human person achieves the fulfilment of human nature. This mystery is seen above all, and is grounded in, the mystery of the Incarnation.

Sherwood's most substantial work of analysis is undoubtedly his *Earlier Ambigua* (1955b). Unlike the works of Epifanovich and von Balthasar, Sherwood's *Earlier Ambigua* focusses its analytical attention specifically on one work, the *Amb.Io.*, and on one issue within that work, the refutation of Origenism, though Sherwood does refer outward to other Maximian works and also shows the synthetic coherence of Maximus' views within the *Ambigua*, even as they go beyond the refutation of Origenism. His intuition is that to understand Maximus' thought within its own context one must look at his **(p. 573)** individual works—the *Amb.Io.* in this case—in their integrity so that individual arguments and insights may be seen within the context in which Maximus himself placed them, rather than within a context supplied from without. I have noted Sherwood's difference from von Balthasar precisely on

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this point and will return to it in my conclusion.

Though he was critical of von Balthasar's earlier notion of a so-called 'Origenist crisis' in Maximus, and although he sees the refutation of Origenism in the *Ambigua* as by no means the primary concern of the work—it is even something of a digression—Sherwood did devote his monograph to Maximus' encounter with Origenism because it provides an entry point to the philosophical and theological pathways of Maximus' thought. It is, in fact, one of the more fully developed arguments in the *Ambigua*. In particular, the problems presented by the doctrines of the primordial *henad* of intellects around God and their subsequent falling away through satiety, the pre-existence of souls, the providential judgement meted out through the creation of bodies, and the final restoration of all things to unity in God (ἀποκατάστασις) provoked in Maximus serious reflection on the nature of motion, the concepts of substance (οὐσία), potency (δύναμις), and actuality ἐνέργεια), the relation between praxis and contemplation (θεωρία), and the nature of the philosophical life more generally, the logic of unity and difference, the distinction between the rational principle (λόγος) of nature and the mode (τρόπος) of existence, freedom of the will, and of the meaning of desire for God. In all of this, Sherwood affirms that 'it was Maximus' task to save … the aspirations underlying Origenism' (1955b: 191). Sherwood's analysis of Maximus' refutation of Origenism, especially as it is found in *Amb.Io.* 7, was to prove very influential on subsequent research.

Walther Völker: Establishing the Primacy of the Spiritual Life in Maximus

Walther Völker published his major work on Maximus, *Maximus Confessor als Meister des geistlichen Lebens*, in 1965. It came as the culmination of a series of studies of the Greek patristic tradition (including Philo). In the years before his study of Maximus, Völker published works on Origen, Philo, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and Ps-Dionysius the Areopagite. He was conscious of presenting Maximus as the conclusion of this development of eastern Christian mysticism and as the foundation for the spiritual culture of Byzantium. These works have as their common thread Völker's interest in the practical and mystical aspects of eastern Christianity. He sets off his work from his predecessors, particularly von Balthasar and Sherwood, by asserting that previous studies had not paid sufficient attention to the specificities of Maximus' teaching on the spiritual life and mysticism. It is this deficiency that Völker sought to rectify in his work.

Völker was struck by the unity in Maximus of speculation, on the one hand, and his deep warmth of feeling (*innigere Gefühlswärme*), on the other. Maximus was a talented (p. 574) dogmatist with a predilection for philosophical questions, but he was driven by an ascetical impulse and his sometimes overly subtle arguments do not detract from the mystical culmination of every aspect of his life and thought. In fact, Völker discerned a relationship between Maximus' turgid writing style and his rigorous moral demands. Speculation—in contemplation, writing, and study—is an ascetical endeavour, and the difficulties that inhere in it are on the very surface of Maximus' texts.

As we have seen, Völker was critical of the way in which Maximus' spiritual teaching was addressed (or not addressed) by the likes of von Balthasar and Sherwood. He was also critical of what he thought was von Balthasar's overly systematic account of the Confessor's thought. It was too much a construct, too tight (*zu straff*). He also questioned von Balthasar's reading of Maximus as, in a certain sense, a proto-Thomist, particularly with respect to von Balthasar's insistence on the close relation between natural motion and moral goodness. Völker was also concerned to avoid the importation of later questions into the study of Maximus, and singles out the work of Loosen (1941) as an example of the contamination of modern questions; Völker mentions specifically Loosen's use of Maximus as a witness to the notion that human beings in their redeemed state participate in 'the trinitarian community', a sentiment one might associate with certain modern authors but not, for Völker, with Maximus.

Völker constructs his own account of Maximus' spiritual teaching in a methodically unfolding argument that proceeds from the ontological foundations of Maximus' notion of sin and spiritual striving, through the struggle with the passions, to knowledge (γνῶσις) in its mystical and theological moments, and ultimately to the life of virtue and divinization (θέωσις). Much of the language and shape of Maximus' moral thought derives from the ancient philosophers, but Völker regards this as only the surface structure; this outer form is filled with biblical content, an example of this being that the intellectualism of Stoic ethics and psychology is replaced by the heart (καρδία) of the biblical view of human life, even as much of the Stoic terminology remains. In general, Völker allows Maximus to sift the ancient philosophical tradition, as did von Balthasar, and sees in his doctrine of spiritual life the mode in

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which ancient philosophical praxis became Christian. Aristotle, who is the corrective to Platonic idealism, is eclipsed by Ps-Dionysius when it comes to the doctrine of cosmic motion, and it is this Dionysian understanding, where God is not only loved by the cosmos but also loves the cosmos, that Maximus follows.

Although Völker is critical of von Balthasar's assimilation, even confusion, of natural and moral goodness, his own basic insight is to apply the insights of metaphysics to asceticism and ethics and vice versa. For example, the chasm separating Creation from God is defined by Maximus as 'affection (στοργή) for the body and this world'; he also shows that πάθος resides not only on the level of ethics but also in the very nature of existing things. We can observe this dynamic clearly in his account of the place of the contemplation of nature (θεωρία φυσική) within his wider examination of the spiritual life. The contemplation of nature is motivated by the intellect's desire to move from multiplicity to simplicity, and this multiplicity and simplicity have both a logical and a practical valence. On the logical side, beings come to be known in their diversity and in their unity, and on the ethical side, the human being comes to partake of divine grace (p. 575) in the midst of the rigorous spiritual labour to know reality. Von Balthasar argued that this contemplation of nature is a necessary aspect of spiritual life for Maximus, whereas Epifanovich and Thunberg argued that it is not, that the path of love can lead one directly to union with God. Völker takes the first position, precisely because of his integrated view of praxis and contemplation.

As with the authors we have already discussed, Christ stands at the heart of Völker's understanding of Maximus. For Völker, the cosmic centrality of Christ, which works itself out in the progress of the spiritual life, is Maximus' unique achievement and contribution to Christian thought. It is Maximus' Christology that demonstrates his understanding of the spiritual destiny of human life, and, unlike some of the earlier Fathers, for whom the Incarnation was thought of primarily as it relates to 'us'—(δι᾽ ἡμᾶς, 'on account of us')—that is, to universal human nature, Maximus considers the Incarnation of Christ as it relates to 'me'—(δι᾽ ἐμέ, 'on account of me') (1965: 75). Thus, personal moral purification is bound directly to the Incarnation of Christ, so that the dogmatic heart of Maximus' work is also the ascetical and mystical heart.

Lars Thunberg: The Anthropological Framework

The last monument of twentieth-century scholarship to be analysed here is Lars Thunberg's *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Thunberg 1995). The work is Thunberg's 1965 doctoral dissertation, which he updated for publication. Sherwood had noted the need for a comprehensive study of Maximus' anthropology in his *Earlier Ambigua*, and it was Thunberg who answered the call.

Thunberg's contention was that the standard evaluation of Maximus' place within the history of dogma, particularly his final struggle against monothelitism and the eventual vindication of his position at the Sixth Ecumenical Council, had overshadowed other crucially important aspects of his thinking. Moreover, Thunberg starts from the conviction that Maximus' career as theologian and spiritual writer is one of a sustained, natural development of his Chalcedonian Christology, and that there was no abrupt change in viewpoint, either with respect to Origenism or monothelitism. Maximus speaks of the two wills of Christ in the early *Letter* 2 (on love) and he refuted Origenism, as Sherwood had shown, early in his career in the *Amb.Io*. What changed through the course of his career was terminology, not theology. Thus, Thunberg set out to demonstrate the consistency of Maximus' views throughout his works, from early to late.

On the specific topic of Thunberg's work, that of anthropology, he claims from the outset that Maximus' anthropology 'holds the key to his theology as a whole' (1995: 19), and that this anthropology derives directly from Maximus' understanding of the Christology of Chalcedon. Consequently, Thunberg announces his standpoint to be theological, though he does make use of history and philosophy throughout his study insofar as he (p. 576) deems them germane to his explication of Maximus, and what Thunberg means by 'theology' is, on the evidence of his text, 'historical theology', for he consistently refers to Maximus' predecessors in the patristic as well as the philosophical tradition.

Thunberg presents an encyclopaedic account of his theme with chapters devoted to Maximus' Chalcedonian and neo-Chalcedonian theological context, his cosmology, his understanding of the composition of human beings and its relation to the Fall of Adam, his psychology and its philosophical and patristic background, his understanding of the passions and their therapy by the virtues, and finally his well-known three-fold path of spiritual progress—ethical, natural, and mystical philosophy—along with the five-fold mediation of all that is, which is realized in the

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Incarnation of Christ. He integrates the ascetical with the more speculative works to achieve his goal of showing the common vision in all Maximus' writings.

As we have seen with the other authors of this survey of twentieth-century reception, for Thunberg Maximus is a corrective and focussing agent for the earlier patristic and philosophical tradition. Thunberg is particularly intent on demonstrating the differences between Maximus and Evagrius, with respect, obviously, to the Evagrian-Origenist notions of the One (ἑνάς) and the Fall of intellects, but also with respect to their individual understandings of contemplation. According to Thunberg, Maximus seeks to draw the Evagrian notions of contemplation and knowledge of God closer to Dionysian symbolism and apophasis. The same is true of the Maximian and Evagrian approaches to prayer. The Evagrian ideal of pure prayer is, for Thunberg (1995: 362–4), primarily intellectual and focussed on the purification of the mind from passionate attachment to images of the material world so that it can contemplate the Trinity. In contrast, Maximus has a more ecstatic notion of the experience of prayer and once again follows the Dionysian mystical language of love.

Thunberg's consideration of Maximus' doctrine of humankind, which begins with the Christology of Chalcedon, ends with the doctrine of deification, and in this way Thunberg maintains the theological orientation to his subject, which is the human being in the cosmos, throughout his work. Thunberg sees deification as something that inheres in the orientation and desire of human beings—if not, properly speaking, in the power of their nature. The basis of deification is the fact of the union of Creator and Creation in Christ, expressed technically as the 'hypostatic union', and is 'the summary of [Maximus'] whole theological anthropology' (1995: 430).

Later Twentieth Century to Today

The years following the initial publication of the works surveyed above saw the production of many other important studies, including works on Maximus' ecclesiology (Riou 1973), Christology (Heinzer 1980), doctrine of the Trinity in its relation to Christology (Piret 1983), and scriptural exegesis (Blowers 1991). Maximus also figures prominently in more specifically philosophical works, those of Gersh (1978) and Perl (1991) among them. (p. 577) The first international colloquium dedicated to Maximus was convened in Fribourg in 1980 and included papers on topics ranging from textual and literary criticism to Maximus' sources and *Nachleben*, with many theological topics in between (Heinzer–von Schönborn 1982). Critical editions of his texts were, and continue to be, produced, thanks primarily to the efforts of scholars associated with *Corpus Christianorum*. Translations into modern languages have increased opportunities for Maximus to be read. The scholarly reception of Maximus the Confessor in the twentieth century has achieved a remarkable breadth and depth of learning. The need to place Maximus in his context, a context that continues to expand as we learn more about his era, has been well articulated and the groundwork for its fulfilment has been laid in this volume.

The first decade of the twenty-first century has already seen a flowering of works on Maximus, with studies of Maximus' anthropology (Renczes 2003), his Christology (Bathrellos 2004), and his views on the body (Cooper 2005). There have also been more philosophical treatments of his ecclesiology (Mueller-Jourdan 2005), his logic of union and distinction (Törönen 2007), and his cosmology (Tollefsen 2008). There has even been another international symposium on Maximus, sponsored in 2012 by the Theology Faculty at the University of Belgrade (Vasiljević 2013). The work of producing critical editions and translations is ongoing and there continues to be a need for analyses of individual works of the Confessor in their integrity.

Conclusion: The Dynamics of Reception Today and Beyond

The most significant question to ask, in conclusion, is one of method. Should Maximus be read as a philosopher and if so (or not), how is this different from reading him as theologian? And this, of course, raises the further questions of what philosophy and theology meant for Maximus, and of whether our understanding of these disciplines corresponds to anything he himself would have understood. More broadly, and here we return to the basic issue between von Balthasar and Sherwood, can Maximus be brought into contemporary philosophical and theological conversations, to challenge modern thought, as von Balthasar does, or to reinvigorate a dying academic theology? Does Maximus present us with living possibilities for thought today, or is our task simply to clarify with ever-greater precision what he meant for his own day? How far down is his legacy allowed to pass? While it is not the task of this chapter to answer these questions, it has attempted to present paradigms of the

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reception—and in some cases retrieval—of Maximus, so that as the tradition of reception continues to grow and accumulate witnesses, we might consider both the shape that reception has taken in the past century—where Maximus has been read as the heart, soul, mind, and strength of Byzantium, as the summation of the ancient tradition, as the correction to every potential excess in Christian thought, as the antidote to the dangers posed by (p. 578) modern philosophy, and as the teacher of what it means to be human—and the shape it might take in the century ahead.

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Notes:

([1]) The reader is referred to the comprehensive bibliography in Van Deun 1998–99 and to the helpful summary of modern scholarship on Maximus in Nichols 1993: 221–52. See suggestions for further reading below.

Joshua Lollar

Joshua Lollar is lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, and priest of St Nicholas Orthodox Church, Lawrence, Kansas.

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The Impact of Maximus the Confessor on John Scottus Eriugena

Catherine Kavanagh

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Ninth-century Carolingian philosopher Johannes Scottus Eriugena clearly intended his work to be the foundation of a renewed theological discourse in the West, enriched by his engagement with Maximus' thought, which had helped him to clarify the negative theology of pseudo-Dionysius. Maximian influence on Eriugena is felt at every level: methodologically, in that he profoundly affects Eriugena's use and conception of dialectic; philosophically, in that Eriugena introduces the ontology and cosmology of Maximus into his own thought; aesthetically, liturgically, and even politically, as seen in his poetry. However, the most important Maximian influence is anthropological: Eriugena makes the Maximian doctrine of *theosis*, or divinization, a key element in his own thought. For a time his project enjoyed some success: the twelfth century, particularly, shows signs of assimilating this thought. However, the reduction of *theosis* to pantheism in the thought of some twelfth-century followers, especially Amalric of Bene, led to his ultimate condemnation.

Keywords: Johannes Scottus Eriugena, Amalric of Bene, negative theology, dialectic, ontology, cosmology, poetry, theosis, divinization

IT has long been recognized that Maximus the Confessor's thought on the Incarnation is at the heart of his contribution to Christian thought, and that it is inseparable from his anthropology (von Balthasar 1961: 270–1). Philosophically, theologically and indeed historically, Maximus' work is focussed on God-made-human: what it means to say that God was made human, and what it means for human nature that God took it on. Maximus' Christology is not a simple external addition to a pre-existing metaphysics, but a complete rethinking of the most advanced form of late neo-Platonic metaphysics, centred on Christ. The structure of procession and return remains, but a new dynamism is given by making Christ the focal and turning-point of the whole system (Garrigues 1982: 173–4). This upsets the logic of classical neo-Platonism considerably, destabilizing the usual order of the general and the particular (Gersh 1996: 271–2). Metaphysics is at the heart of Eriugena's interests; as Beierwaltes observed, he is gradually working his way from a fundamentally Augustinian interpretation of metaphysics to a position akin to that of Plotinus (Beierwaltes 1979: 82–6). At the centre of Maximus' system is Christ, but Christ is the incarnate Word: it is the Incarnation which makes the fundamental difference between Christian and Hellenistic metaphysics (as Augustine had observed, *Conf.* 7. 9. 14, Skutella–Verheijen 1981: 101). Therefore, the balance within Maximus' system alters in favour of the human being as a whole, and not merely the soul, notwithstanding the severe asceticism of Byzantine monasticism (Thunberg 1965: 95–103). This complicates Platonic ethics a good deal: it is no longer a matter of soul = good, flesh/matter = bad (Kavanagh 2009b: 79); there are influences for good and evil at work at both the level of body and and of soul. This, philosophically, is what leads to the development of complex theories of will and passion, and it is here that we must look for the reason for Byzantine asceticism, including Maximus' reasons: it is aimed not merely at subduing the body (in spite of appearances), but at forming both body and soul in (p. 481) a particular direction. It is true, of course, that Maximus' dyophysite Christology is a response to a particular theological crisis within the church, but there are good philosophical reasons for it as well.

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The question as regards the extent to which his great admirer, the ninth-century Irish philosopher and theologian John Scottus Eriugena, absorbs the full Maximian Christology and anthropology is a challenging one. He certainly absorbs a lot of it, as we can see in his thinking on soul, his anthropology (they are to all intents and purposes synonymous), his negative theology, and his thinking on deification (Alonso 1950: 381–9). There are also elements in Eriugena's logic which are obviously Maximian, although they also have a western source in Boethius (Kavanagh 2005: 31)—Boethius would have made it much easier for Eriugena to see what Maximus was doing, and accept it. It must also be remembered that Maximus himself is at times "Western" in his thinking (Larchet 1998: 76–124), and thus is a very sympathetic author for someone trained up in Augustinian theology, but developing an interest in Byzantine thought.

But to what extent is Eriugena's metaphysics inherently christological, as is that of Maximus? The key to the question, unsurprisingly, is the person of Christ. If one takes the figure of Christ as found in the poetry (where it figures strongly) as read for the *Periphyseon* and other texts, then the argument can be made that, yes, Eriugena's thought is fundamentally christological and Maximian. However, obviously, one has to engage in a certain hermeneutical process, and it is possible to take Eriugena's thought as purely rationalistic, as Hauréau did (Jeauneau 1979: 47), or as Origenist (Colish 1982: 145). The question is difficult. Eriugena does not reproduce Maximus' thought exactly, but neither can he be said to get it wrong. Rather, there is a difference of emphasis between the two thinkers, which in the end can distort Maximus' thought, depending on the hermeneutic applied. This difference of emphasis concerns the role of the human intellect as distinct from (but not necessarily opposed to) the role of faith. It is most clearly discernible in certain mistranslations studied by René Roques (1975: 45–98) and Édouard Jeauneau (1979: 47–8). In the Eriugenian translation of *Amb.Io.* 10 (Jeauneau 1988, CCSG 18; PG 91. 1152C), we find Maximus developing the Pauline theme of the Christian who has risen above the law in the following of Christ: the necessary condition for the attainment of true *gnosis* is the generous following of Christ, the Word, which Maximus renders as *Logos*. However (and making all due allowance for the difficulties of script and manuscript), Eriugena translates—or rather mistranslates—*logos* here as 'reason', making the passage mean that humankind is led to the most sublime good by faith in reason alone, rather than the Word alone (Jeauneau 1979: 47). On the one hand, this need not contradict Maximus—the Word does work through reason—but it tends to shift the emphasis from faith in God's grace to the activity of the human intellect: faith and reason come dangerously close to assimilation, in fact. Eriugena does tend to see Maximus through the prism of his own strongly rationalistic thought, which has a far greater emphasis on the role of human intellect and knowledge, and the effort involved in acquiring these: for Eriugena, *ascesis* means the acquisition of wisdom, and this means intellectual effort (Jeauneau 1987: 243–54). Philosophically and systematically Eriugena understood Maximus' Christology, including those elements (p. 482) that go beyond Origen, but he presents the following of Christ as a work of reason and intellect, which can de-emphasize the role of faith, and this emerges throughout his work, as we will see in several places. Maximus, on the other hand, is impossible to misunderstand. The christological emphasis in Maximus makes for an overlap between hermeneutics and metaphysics, because of the identification of Christ with the Word: metaphysics is done via hermeneutics, and it is a metaphysical hermeneutics, with deep roots in neo-Platonic cosmology—but it is not reducible to the terms of Platonic cosmology alone.

The central themes we find in Eriugena which clearly have a Maximian origin are as follows, then: (a) hermeneutical: as Jeauneau has observed, Eriugena found in Maximus a completely original biblical hermeneutics, in which Maximus' cosmology and anthropology play a central role (Jeauneau 1982: 353–5); we can see Eriugena making full use of that hermeneutics in his analysis of the Tree of Life, in which he gives us his thought on the return of human nature to the Godhead; (b) philosophical: Eriugena learnt the distinction between *quia est* and *quid sit* in relation to God from Maximus (Jeauneau 1982: 356): we can know of God that God is, but not what God is. He also accepts the five-fold Maximian division of nature: (1) created nature—uncreated nature; (2) the intelligible—the sensible; (3) heaven—earth; (4) paradise—inhabited world; (5) male—female, and works this into his own four-fold division of nature, based on distinctions between (1) uncreated—creating; (2) created—creating; (3) created—uncreating; (4) uncreated—uncreating (Jeauneau 1982: 357–9). Much of Eriugena's philosophical and theological vocabulary is also taken from Maximus (Jeauneau 1982: 355–62). Both schemes are ultimately articulations of the neo-Platonic scheme of procession and return; however, following Maximus' rethinking of the scheme in the light of the Incarnation, the human being has become the 'point of the return': the movement back towards God begins with the human being, in whom all the divisions of nature are resumed. We shall see that emerging particularly clearly in Eriugena's thinking on soul. Eriugena also absorbed certain Aristotelian elements from Maximus, especially his realism, elements which Maximus had himself learnt from Leontius of Byzantium

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(Gersh 1977: 283–8) The Maximian identification of place and time as those categories essential to Being also plays a very important part for Eriugena: we see this especially in his analysis of the categories in Book 1 of the *Periphyseon* (Kavanagh 2005: 571–601; 2009a: 31–2). The reversal of the usual precedence of the general and the particular found in Maximus also plays an important part in Eriugena's thought, as we see in the adoption of the particularities of rhetoric employed in his biblical hermeneutics.

This brings us to a third theme which Eriugena takes from Maximus, and that is Christology and its relation to the divinization of humankind; whether Eriugena's Christology is fully orthodox, or whether instead he tends to reduce Christ to an abstract spiritual, essentially Origenist figure, is a point of debate among scholars, as has been noted in the opening paragraphs of this chapter. Finally, we need to examine the subsequent fate of Eriugena's attempt to introduce Maximus into western theology: was this due to his misunderstanding of Maximus, or to a more fundamental incompatibility in (p. 483) eastern/western Christian thought generally—was he engaged in an impossible enterprise to begin with; or was it due to other factors?

Johannes Scottus Eriugena first encountered Maximus following the recommendation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius that he study the Greek glosses on the *Corpus Dionysiacum,* then thought to be by Maximus (Jeauneau 1983: 140–3). He went on to translate two major, heavily philosophical works of Maximus: the *Ambigua Addressed to John* [1] and the *Questions Addressed to Thalassius*. His enthusiasm for Maximus' thought is evident in the *Periphyseon*: Eriugena adopts Maximus' anthropology completely, in particular the emphasis on humankind's Creation as the microcosm, and the conception of the human being as the mediator (Otten 1990: 140–9); Maximus' structuring of reality and of human nature are fundamental to Eriugena's anthropology. Given that Maximus already modifies the thought of Ps-Dionysius considerably, there is an interesting hermeneutical process at work here: the western Eriugena, trained in the school of Augustine, finds, as he tells us, an extraordinary spiritual stimulus in Dionysius: he tells us that Dionysius 'awoke' him (Jeauneau 1983: 141). However, as his *Explanations of the Celestial Hierarchy* reveal, he found Dionysius challenging in spite of the fascination—or perhaps the challenge was part of the fascination. Maximus helps him to clarify various points in Dionysius—but Maximus is a thinker who himself demonstrates 'Augustinian' tendencies (von Balthasar 1961: 13). It is not wholly surprising, then, that Eriugena should have found Maximus a congenial author, in spite of the immense difficulties which stood in the way of Eriugena's achieving any understanding at all of this most difficult of Greek Fathers.

This leads us to the question of Eriugena's knowledge of Greek. How much did he really know, and where did he learn it? It seems that Eriugena began with the kind of rudimentary knowledge of Greek for which the Irish in particular were noted in the Carolingian era (Jeauneau 1979: 10–12). His earlier texts, particularly the *Annotationes in Marcianum*, display a keen interest in it (Jeauneau 1979: 13–14), and he was known to have the best grasp of it in that Carolingian circle. This is how he came to be invited to re-translate the *Corpus Dionysiacum* by Charles the Bald, and he seems to have learnt a great deal from the process of doing that translation—as he tells us himself in the introductory verses (*Carmina*, 20–1, Herren 1995). A copy of this version was sent to Rome, where Anastasius Bibliothecarius delivered an ambivalent and rather pungent verdict on it: on the one hand, he observed that it was an extraordinary achievement for 'a barbarian at the edge of the world'; on the other hand, he noted that the translation itself needed translating. Anastasius seems to have had the temperament of a severe but interested *Doktorvater* however, since he went to the trouble of annotating Eriugena's translation with corrections (no longer extant, alas) and the standard Byzantine scholia, which Anastasius attributes to Maximus the Confessor, for the benefit of his exotic 'pupil'. Eriugena subsequently (p. 484) produced a new, improved version of the corpus, and was so taken with what he had seen of Maximus in the scholia that he obtained such works of Maximus as he could, and translated them. These translations, as translations, are problematic, although Constas expresses a strong appreciation for the literalness of the translation in his recent edition of the *Ambigua* (Constas 2014: vol. 2, 338). Eriugena learnt a great deal from doing them, and had enough theological and philosophical *nous* to enable him to see what was really going on. In sum, then: Eriugena's Greek was always poor, certainly by the standards of the Renaissance, and he seems to have learnt by doing—as Jeauneau says, 'sur le tas et sur le tard' (Jeauneau 1979), but it was good enough to enable him to sup 'the sacred nectar of the Greeks', and to be really nourished by it (Jeauneau 1983: 138, 149).

Hermeneutics and Exegesis

As has been noted, Eriugena found a completely new style of hermeneutical approach to biblical texts in Maximus

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the Confessor, an approach which unified close textual reading with broad philosophical and theological concerns. We see that approach at work in his analysis of the two trees of paradise, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, in which he gives us his most comprehensive account of the theology of deification in Book 5 of the *Periphyseon* (Jeauneau CCCM 160–5 1995–2000; Sheldon-Williams and Jeauneau, Scriptores latini hiberniae 7, 9, 1, 13 1965–95; trans. Sheldon-Williams 1987). Introducing the topic of the return of human nature to God, and its subsequent deification, Eriugena tells us:

> [W]e must consider this return in two ways: first, the restoration of the whole human nature in Christ; and then … we must consider the individual bliss and deification of those who shall ascend into God. For it is one thing to return into paradise, another to eat of the Tree of Life.
>
> (*Periphyseon* V, Jeauneau CCCM 165 2000: 978D–979A. 5395–5401)

The general return of human nature is the overall topic, subdivided into two aspects: the restoration of the original state of human nature on the one hand, human nature being represented by paradise; and the deification of the saints, which is a stage beyond the original Creation on the other, represented here by tasting of the Tree of Life.

He goes on to analyse the symbol of the Tree of Life itself, and to expand the complexity of the interpretation in a variety of ways. So the Tree of Life is Christ, and its fruit is deification. The focus then moves to the location of the tree: it is in the midst of paradise. Paradise means human nature, but the midst of human nature, which is the image of God, is an innermost and secret place (*sinis occultis naturae*), and it is here that the tree is planted: it is here that human nature is conformed to Christ, if it (p. 485) is conformed to him at all. Reaching this place requires ascetical discipline, that is to say, the acquisition of wisdom; and only those prepared to acquire it reach the 'midst of paradise', and are permitted to contemplate Christ—that is to say, to taste of the tree. He brings in another biblical image to reinforce this point about the hiddenness of the innermost part of human nature, and present it from another angle: the Temple of Solomon, which was divided into several different levels, from the outer portico to the Holy of Holies. The Temple is superimposed on the idea of paradise: the Temple and paradise are ultimately the same thing. So as all could enter the outer portico, but only the high-priest could enter the Holy of Holies, so all will enter paradise generally—that is, will participate in the general resurrection (the overcoming of Maximus' fourth division), but only those who are in the high priest, who is Christ, will enter the Holy of Holies—that is, participate in deification—which is also the tasting of the Tree of Life. Following this text, there comes a whole battery of biblical images, all read christologically: fragrance, the ark of the Covenant, the rod of Moses, the manna, and the altar of sacrifice. Finally, the cherubim placed on either side of the ark which sat in the Temple are interpreted, representing both the sensible and intelligible worlds, and, more profoundly, the angelic and human natures, which are next to Christ in dignity. Eriugena concludes his interpretation of the Tree of Life by saying:

> You see then what a high thing it is, transcending our natural faculties, to approach this tree which is planted in the midst of paradise, that is to say, of human nature, and to partake of its fruit. It was to this tree … that Paul was brought when he was rapt into the third heaven of our nature … into the mind itself, in which the Word of God, that is, the Tree of Life, dwells in light inaccessible, transcending in a mysterious way all essence, all potency and all act, beyond and yet at the same time within the nature that was made in the image of God.
>
> (*Periphyseon* V, Jeauneau CCCM 165 2000: 982A–B. 5546–54)

Eriugena's understanding of deification emerges here as distinctly—and distinctively—Maximian. All the characteristics are present: deification is the ultimate destiny of humankind, but not all will attain it; it takes place through and by means of Christ, and it is only by ascetical practice that the saints attain it. It is at this last point that an element of difference emerges: for Eriugena, it is the acquisition of wisdom that prepares the way for deification—an intellectual process—whereas for Maximus, it is the practice of the virtues, which is first and foremost a function of the human will, which is the necessary preparation. Nonetheless, most of the elements are present—most importantly, the cosmological unification of all nature in the deification of humankind—whilst, at the same time, these natures retain their individual identity. It is precisely this identity in unity which was not understood subsequently, either by Eriugena's admirers, one of whom, Amalric of Bene, effectively got him condemned, nor by those who in fact condemned him. All this progression of thought, moreover, has been achieved hermeneutically, by means of scriptural interpretation: it is the Bible which is leading the way rather than logical process.

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(p. 486) Philosophical Themes and Anthropology

The philosophy of Johannes Scottus Eriugena is normally identified with late-antique/early mediaeval Platonism, which has a very distinctively emanationist cosmological model. As has been mentioned, however, Maximus the Confessor makes significant use of Aristotelian concepts, including that of causality (Gersh 1977: 374–6). Causality in this sense is an important concept for Eriugena: it is the link which allows the creature to know the otherwise utterly transcendent God who made it. In spite of the differences, there is an interesting anticipation of Aquinas' cosmology of contingency and analogy here. For Eriugena, the explicitly neo-Platonic structure of procession and return will always be more apparent than is the case with Maximus, who transforms it into a theology of reciprocity between God-made-man and humankind divinized, yet Maximus' understanding of causality, in which the structure of procession and return is evident, is an important element in his anthropology, although heavily modified by the importance which he attaches to human will and freedom (*Ambigua*, PG 91. 1392A; Nichols 1993: 203–4).

There are two other very powerful ideas which Eriugena brings to bear on the question of God's relation with the world. The first of these is the radical negative theology of Ps-Dionysius; although the *quid est/quia est* distinction is from Maximus, Eriugena takes his negative theology as a whole from Dionysius. The second is the Maximian *reditus* and divinization, and they are related. Creation, as described in Genesis, is a theophany (*Periphyseon* I, Jeauneau CCCM 160 1996: 449A–450B; *Periphyseon* III, Jeauneau CCCM 163 1997: 633B–634A) in other words, a manifestation of God, and therefore it has something of his nature. The life of the world—that is, the existence of the world—is the divine life communicating itself, right down to the lowest levels of existence. In that sense then, the world is not so radically separated from him: he is in it, and this presence is in fact what keeps the universe in existence. On the other hand, God, as he is in himself, is utterly unknowable; Eriugena's conception of God is very close to Plotinus' conception of the One,[2] but this is modified by his trinitarianism, which is essentially Byzantine. Eriugena considers the Greek description of the Trinity—essence, power, and operation—to be the most accurate, and this is a triad which can exist on several levels. Insofar as we can know God, the first person and the essence is the Father, the second is the *Logos*, the power of the essence, and the third is the operation of God, the Holy Spirit, but the divine life in itself is utterly unknowable and at the highest level, ineffable. As we move through the lower levels of Creation, (p. 487) however, we can see it more clearly. It is reflected—that is to say, present in a particular way—in the world in general, created through the power of the Son by the essence of the Father showing, or manifesting, itself through the operation of the Holy Spirit: operation makes things manifest, and it is therefore well applied to that operation which is the life or soul of the world. However, because the Trinity as it is in itself is utterly unknowable, and always remains as such above the world, we avoid the problem of making God subject to limitation, place and time. This presence in the world is life, or soul.

The first division in the universal soul is between rational and irrational soul. The latter refers to the animals, whereas the former,

> … is distributed between angels and human beings, but whereas in angels it is called intellectual as though for a special meaning, in human beings it is called rational—although in actual fact, the truth is that in both angels and human beings it is both intellectual and rational.
>
> (*Periphyseon* III, Jeauneau CCCM 163 1998: 732C–732D)

This division between human and angel is something he receives from Maximus. He goes on to observe that the irrational soul is divided into two types: the sensitive in animals, and the auctive in plants, and that all four of these types of soul are found in humankind: intellect, as with angels; rational, as with humankind; sensitive, as with animals; and life (which is the primary characteristic of soul), like the plants, and subsistence in existence, and for this reason, as for Maximus, humankind is called the workshop of all creatures (*creaturarum omnium officina*); angels do not participate in corporeal life, and therefore lack sensitivity. Eriugena has some difficulty with this division, since the division between rational/intellectual which is immortal, on the one hand, and sensitive/auctive which dies, on the other, seems to him an absolute one, and it seems as though two mutually contradictory species (one characterized by possession, the other by privation, of life) are included in one genus of soul. Given that the bodies of plants and animals 'survive', so to speak, as elements after their deaths, given that in every creature, the triad of essence, power, and operation is to be found, and given that soul of any kind is higher than bodies made of elements, it seems to him contradictory to say that the irrational soul does not in some manner survive, which is what the Fathers, both eastern and western, say (*Periphyseon* III, Jeauneau CCCM 163 1998: 736C–739D).

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Eriugena then goes on to discuss the characteristics of the human soul in particular. The human soul is always considered as an aspect of human nature as a whole, although the extent to which human nature can be identified with the soul alone is an important one: in fact, it cannot. He tells us: 'by the reason of their nature (*naturali tamen ratione*) neither do the parts [i.e. body and soul] cease to be always inseparably related to the whole, nor the whole to the parts. For the reason of their relation can never cease to be. Thus, what to the corporeal sense seems to be separated, must on a higher view of things always subsist as it was inseparably' (*Periphyseon* III, Jeauneau CCCM 163 1998; (p. 488) 729C–730A). Here we see Eriugena struggling to reconcile the immortal soul with the corruptible body, finally coming to the conclusion that, even in dissolution, the body remains somehow attached to the soul. In this, he is inheriting a Maximian solution to a question which had been closely argued in the Byzantine world. From being a dissoluble relation between two loosely conjoined substances, with the soul being seen as the reality and the body being the image, or shadow of it, the relation between body and soul had been made far closer, moving through Leontius of Byzantium's model of two substances in one hypostasis to Maximus' assertion that body and soul were joined indissolubly, even after the death of the former, and that human nature itself was one substance, composed of form (soul) and matter (body). Maximus takes the Aristotelian view that form and matter are intellectually distinguishable but really inseparable in any given reality. Human nature has only one *logos* in God, not two which are subsequently joined together. Because it is immaterial and immortal, of course, soul must be 'located', and it does work in a very real way through the body (Sheldon-Williams 1983: 21).

Human nature, following Maximus, then, is both body and soul, composed of sense, reason, intellect, and vital motion, rather than soul as such. The human soul is simple: the various elements noted in it are not different parts, but rather different functions (*Periphyseon* IV, Jeauneau CCCM 164 1999: 787C–788A). Once again, we note the influence of Maximus on Eriugena's anthropology. Augustine had been content to read the physical account of Creation as being, on one level, an account of the body, male and female, as we have it now, but Eriugena considers this gross materialism. The material body we inhabit now, as far as he is concerned, is not the body we were intended to have. As humankind was originally created, it was neither male nor female, but the perfect image of God; sexual division came about as a result of the Fall—this he takes from Maximus, for whom it is the final division of nature (*Amb.* 41, PG 91. 1304D–1305B; Jeauneau 1988: 180). Maximus is following Gregory of Nyssa here, who maintains that the body originally intended for humanity was not the material body we have now, but a body infinitely more subtle and more powerful—an idea reminiscent of the Plotinian idea of intelligible matter. Eriugena tells us, as above, that God is a Trinity of essence, power, and activity (*ousia, dunamis*, and *energeia*), and this is also the structure of the human soul, which is the true image of God (*imago dei*). As God has created the soul in his own image and likeness, so the soul chooses a body in its own likeness: the body is a likeness of the likeness of God (*Periphyseon* IV, Jeauneau CCCM 164 1999: 790C–790D). Eriugena goes on to observe that, 'In the soul, under a unitary mode, are the powers of the whole body which provide for all things separately' (*Periphyseon* 2. 618B), that is to say, that the body depends on the soul for life and existence, and is contained in the soul, and he illustrates this with much mathematical imagery demonstrating that all things are contained in their unified principles. So when Eriugena talks about the body, and above all when he talks about the incorruptible/resurrected body, he is talking about the transformed, spiritual body we were meant to have before the Fall, and which we will eventually have in imitation of Christ, following both Maximus and Gregory of Nyssa (*Periphyseon* IV, Jeauneau CCCM 164 1999: 800B–D; 803A).

(p. 489) Return, Christology, Divinization (*Theosis*)

The expansion of God which we see in Creation, above all in humanity, is only one aspect of his motion, however; the other aspect is the return, in which all created things will return to him through Christ. As has been noted, Maximus' thought is profoundly christological, and this affects everything, including the metaphysics and anthropology. As we have seen in our discussion of his hermeneutics and the debt he owes Maximus there, Eriugena took most of his ideas on the return from Maximus. The point of the cosmic return is the human being who contains all strands of existence: both a rational soul, which likens him/her to God, and a material body, which relates him/her to the world. The Logos of humanity in God is one, body and soul. The Incarnation and resurrection of Christ are the great pattern of the return, and as Christ was resurrected in the flesh, so too will all humankind be resurrected. For Maximus, the body was always intended by God for humanity. Humankind is one nature—a composite nature, to be sure, but human nature cannot be split up into body and soul. The human body and the human soul enjoy a relationship of mutual dependence: the soul relies on the body for its activity in this world,

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whereas the body relies on the intellect of the soul for guidance as to its proper activity. We can see here the influence of Plato's three-part psychology: sense, emotion and reason. For Maximus, the human being consists of sense, reason, and intellect which informs the reason. The proper end of the human being is the contemplation of the divine, and insofar as the sense is guided by the reason, and the reason is guided by the intellect, then the human creature will turn towards God, and attain its proper end, which is reunification with the divine. However, insofar as humanity is distracted by material things, the reason turns away from the intellect, and the intellect loses sight of God, and humanity descends lower and lower. On the whole, reason and intellect are properties of the soul, whereas sense is identified with the body, but the soul has its own kind of sense also. There is always a question as to whether the soul and the intellect are different, or whether the intellect is the higher part of the soul. In Book 4 of the *Periphyseon*, Eriugena declares that soul and intellect, for all practical purposes, are synonymous.

The process of the return is essentially a process of contemplation: as intellect or mind contemplates the divinity, it is drawn closer and closer to it. The resurrected body is likewise involved in this process of contemplation, until eventually it is absorbed into the soul, and the soul into divinity. For Maximus this does not mean a loss of identity: he uses the famous simile of iron in fire to illustrate the process of unification, a simile which is repeated by Eriugena in the first book of the *Periphyseon* (*Periphyseon* I, Jeauneau CCCM 160 1996: 450B).

The first reference to Maximus and theophany in the *Periphyseon* is an aside in Book 1, in which Eriugena quotes Maximus as saying that theophany occurs when the compassion of Christ descends into human nature, which is simultaneously exalted by love of (p. 490) and desire for God; the theophany occurs in the encounter. The first really substantial chunk of Maximus' doctrine to be quoted, however, comes in Book II of the *Periphyseon*, where Eriugena quotes extensively from *Ambiguum* 41 on the five divisions of the 'substance of all things', as he calls it. He goes straight to the heart of the matter in his commentary:

> For human beings were created with a nature of so high a status that there is no creature, whether visible or intelligible, that cannot be found in them. For the human being is composed of the two universal parts of created nature by way of a wonderful union, for he/she is the conjunction of the sensible and the intelligible, that is, the extremities of all Creation, for in nature, there is nothing lower than body and nothing more exalted than intellect, as St Augustine testifies in his book, *De uera religione* … the division of all substances reaches its term in human nature.
>
> (*Periphyseon* II, Jeauneau CCCM 163 1997: 531A–B).

For Eriugena, therefore, as for Maximus, humanity is the crux, the central point, on which the universe turns. He goes on to observe '… the gathering together into the One … begins from man, and ascends through men to God, who is the beginning of all division and the end of all unification.' In this regard, Eriugena also notes that the first cause and the final end of the universe are the same—that is, God—and that this is something he has learnt from Maximus.

At 535B, Eriugena quotes a sentence that interests him intensely:

> [T]hen, he says, by joining the intelligibles and the sensibles in addition to these, that is to the unifications of natures that have been mentioned, through the equality of his knowledge with that of the angels, he will make all creatures one single creature, not separated in him in respect of knowledge and ignorance, for he will have a gnostic science of reasons [i.e. causes] in the things that are, equal to that of the angels … the profundity of this sentence appears to me unfathomable … especially where he says … he will have a gnostic science equal to that of the angels … now he seems to say that the unification of natural substances is in the intellect alone, but not in the things themselves, that is to say, that it is not those things which through generation into diverse genera and diverse forms and infinite individuals received from the Creator's providence their intelligible or sensible diversity, for not otherwise do we understand that there is a unification of created substances in the angels than by their gnostic science alone … For the understanding of things is what things really are, in the words of St Dionysius: the knowledge of the things that are is the things that are.
>
> (*Periphyseon* II, Jeauneau CCCM 162 1997: 535B–535D)

Now this Eriugenian translation of Dionysius, although not completely wrong, does have a very particular emphasis

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on knowledge. He has constructed the translation so as to make it appear that knowledge is the crucial thing, because in this way it harmonizes with what he thinks Ps-Dionysius is saying. However, his translation of Dionysius here really is incorrect. The manuscript (*Paris, Bibliothèque nationale* 452), from which he (p. 491) translated the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, does not have accents, and he read it here as 'making being identical with divine knowledge, instead of consequent on it' (Sheldon-Williams 1983: 222 n.116). This emphasis on knowledge strengthens the impression of a certain Origenistic tendency in Eriugena's thought: when he comes to deal with the Incarnation, he treats Christ as a second exemplar of humanity to a far greater extent than as the redeemer of humankind. His sense of the damage done by the Fall is nowhere as acute as that of Maximus. Indeed, he sees human nature as in essence untouched by it; humankind's sin, for Eriugena, was not so much a malicious turning away from God (which it very definitely is for Maximus), but a mere deception, which does not go to the heart of his nature, and clearly does not merit such a thorough condemnation. Consequently, his sense of urgency in dealing with the redemptive aspect of the Incarnation is not as strong either. How does this affect his understanding of deification—is it substantially different from that of Maximus?

He takes Christ as exemplar, which is fine, as far as it goes: Christ is certainly the exemplar for Maximus also, in as much as he is humanity perfected, and the Logos of all human perfection (Maximus reiterates very strongly the doctrine that Christ becomes incarnate in the human virtues). However, Eriugena's sense of human free will, of the tragic possibility of the refusal of God, is not so strong. Maximus is extremely sensitive to questions involving human will: the redemption of humanity is brought about by Christ's perfect assent, as human, to the will of the Father. In his perfect submission of his own will to that of the Father, Christ undoes the work of Adam, who preferred his own will to God's. Human beings are still wilful and self-absorbed: each individual has to go through the process of submission for himself, and this is a struggle—the result of which, however, is the glory won for us by Christ. For Eriugena, however, the struggle is a struggle to know and to learn: the struggle with the passions is simply not felt in the same way.

This emphasis on knowledge accounts to a certain extent also for Eriugena's rather peculiar view of the Fall: if the sin of Adam consisted in not knowing what was going on—and this is his view—then nothing very bad happened, since, by the same logic according to which one cannot refuse the conclusion of a valid syllogism, one cannot be held accountable for an error in judgement, of the possibility of which one was not warned. It also does away with human freedom, and in doing away with human freedom, it also does away with any importance whatever being given to the individual, since all will do what they are destined to do anyway. Deification, then, becomes almost exclusively a matter of knowledge. But the difference is a subtle one, since for Maximus, also, deification involves knowledge. But he emphasizes very strongly that it is through the practical life—the practice of the virtues and the rejection of the vices and the ordering of the passions—that the mind is made capable of contemplation; that deification is initiated as Christ becomes incarnate in the virtues of the practising Christian; and that will and mind are closely connected. The same emphasis on the practice of the virtues is not found in Eriugena, although he does mention it in the place where his most comprehensive account of deification is to be found, that is, as we have seen, in (p. 492) the analysis of the two trees of paradise, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the Tree of Life.

To what extent, then, is Eriugena's understanding of the person of Christ the same as that of Maximus? Eriugena's poetry throws some interesting light on this issue. When we turn to Eriugena's poetry, we find, as might be expected, a different approach to presenting theological ideas, focussed on vivid images and the music of the text rather than on a systematic process of argument. However, the elements of Maximus' thought that emerge here are all the more striking for that. In several of the poems, we find vivid liturgical and scriptural imagery, very western in its feeling of realism and affectivity, and yet clearly interpreted in a Maximian key. See, for example, the following lines of the poem *Hellinas Troasque*:

> See the wood of the cross that embraces the four-cornered world
> Of his own accord did our Lord hang upon it
> And the Word of the Father deigned to receive the flesh
> In which for our sake he became a victim who pleased.
> Behold the pierced palms, the shoulders and feet
> The temples girt with the cruel wreath of thorns
> From the midst of his side, the unlocked fount of salvation
> Flow living draughts of water and blood

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> The water washes the whole world clean of its sin of old.
> The blood makes us mortals divine.

(*Poem* 1, Herren 1995: 58–63, lines 19–26)

Certainly the images of the crucifixion here and the pathos they engender are western in feel (although the pathos of the crucifixion is more typically a late mediaeval theme), but the theological purpose is kept very firmly in view here: this is not a portrait of suffering, of abjection, for its own sake. This is even clearer in other poems: in the poem *Postquam nostra salus*, Eriugena expands on the relationship between human flesh and God's divinity:

> Still no-one could deny that life has tasted death
> The death of the flesh of life is rightly called life's death
> For life suffered with the Flesh which hung alone.
> The acumen of pure reason goes deeper
> And concludes that the flesh of life is life;
> If the life is the Word, and the Word is also made flesh,
> Surely it follows to grant that life is flesh
> And if by a converse path, flesh be the Word
> It follows straight away the flesh is turned into life.
> Therefore the flesh of Christ is the most real life
> By living and dying it consumed all death.
> Christ came from above to assume an earthly garment;
> Clothed in this raiment and with it he flew upwards
> And changed the clothing received from the Virgin into God,
> Making a unity of Spirit, flesh and Godhead.
> The Lord who is the death of death rose living into heaven
> And brought our nature with him to the self-same place.
> He who was made with humanity complete now makes this nature into oneness.

(p. 493) (Herren 1995: 90–5)

The point is that meditation on suffering tells us something about human nature, about the divine nature and about the working of the Incarnation, which can only be understood in terms of the complex interlinking of persons and natures hammered out in the post-Chalcedonian theological disputes. It is in suffering that the nature of flesh as flesh is most evident; in fact, suffering is the very nature of flesh as such, and therefore the Incarnation necessarily involves it—if the Incarnation is really an Incarnation, and not merely an image. Other issues arise here: there is a distinction, which Eriugena knew, in Gregory of Nyssa between body and flesh, or rather, the body we were meant to have and the body we actually do have following the Fall. By his Incarnation, death, and resurrection, Christ assumed the mortal weakness of the fallen body, restored it to it prelapsarian splendour and, ascending to the participation in the internal life of the Trinity, opened for all flesh the possibility of following the same path: by suffering, that is, ascesis, humanity participates in the Passion of Christ in order to participate in his resurrection and divinity. It is notable that Eriugena does not dwell on these images of the crucifixion for their own sake, simply for the sake of the pathos; he very quickly moves to a theological meditation on what all this actually means, and why it is that Christ suffers as the way of opening the way to divinization or *theosis* for humanity.

The Subsequent Reception of Maximus and Eriugena in the West

The final issue to be addressed here is the eventual fate of this attempt to introduce Maximus the Confessor into western theology. It could have worked: there are elements in Maximus sufficiently close to a western way of thinking to make this possible—Maximus has often struck people as someone who incorporates the Augustinian insights into a calmer, perhaps more hopeful frame of mind, at least as regards human depravity and the possibilities of the human intellect. It is clear from the *Periphyseon* that Eriugena intended enriching the philosophical and theological life of the western church with the ideas which he had found so stimulating in the great Byzantine thinkers. However, this would not happen, for a variety of reasons. Initially, Eriugena's work appears to have been well received, but the political instability of the period did not lend itself to the establishment of a consistent intellectual discourse, and throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, we find very little evidence

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of much philosophical activity. However, in the twelfth century, Eriugenian thought seems to have enjoyed something of a renaissance, above all at the Cathedral School of Chartres, where his Platonic cosmology was of interest to people such as Bernard of Chartres. In Paris his translation (p. 494) of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* played a very important part in the development of the Victorine school (Dondaine 1953: 35–66): the *Periphyseon* was excerpted as part of the standard gloss on the *Corpus*, and Honorius of Autun produced a kind of florilegium of the *Periphyseon*, the *Clavis physicae* (ed. Lucentini 1974), which continued to be read long after the original from which it was drawn had been suppressed. According to Étienne Gilson, Bernard of Clairvaux knew some of Eriugena's work, and used it: there are manuscripts containing Eriugenian material which originate in Citeaux (Gilson 1935: 194). The *Periphyseon* was excerpted extensively for the version of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* used by the Victorines—and those glosses, being anonymous, survived the condemnation. All this was to change, however, during the thirteenth century. Why? There were several manuscripts of Eriugena's works in circulation; he was well known and admired. Indeed works not known to be by him continued to circulate and be popular long after his condemnation—but what brought about this condemnation?

It had always been acknowledged that Eriugena was a difficult author: his involvement in the controversy surrounding predestination proved that, if nothing else did; he had never been a stranger to controversy. However, in 1210, he was condemned in the most unambiguous terms, along with David of Dinant and Amalric of Bène—or Chartres: Amalric is really a member of the School of Chartres—a condemnation reiterated in 1225, and in several papal letters of the same period; this happened again in 1681 upon publication of Gale's *editio princeps*, upon which the *Periphyseon* was promptly placed on the Index, lingering there until the final abolition of the Index. What is condemned is essentially pantheism. David is accused of it, as is Amalric, as is Eriugena—and the claim has lingered. The claim that the universe is unified in God through human deification—the Maximian cosmology which Eriugena attempted to reproduce in Latin terms (possibly somewhat crudely)—seemed to some minds at least to be stating that the universe is God. We know that Eriugena intended to reproduce the Maximian christological cosmology for the benefit of the western church, and, given its strong emphasis in negative theology, that pantheism in the strict sense cannot be said to be characteristic of his work at all, which the condemnation seems to have missed, but what of the other two?

It is difficult to know for certain, since in their case, the instruction to destroy their works seems to have been followed absolutely. However, we know something of what they said from other works in which theirs were discussed, most notably, in the case of David of Dinant, in a discussion by Albert the Great (Théry 1925: 50–113; Capelle 1932: 51–68). What emerges from these citations is that Amalric was, in fact, influenced by Eriugena, although clumsily, not very deeply and really only to the extent of having employed some of his vocabulary deprived, however, of its proper signification (Capelle 1932: 23).Eriugena's condemnation came about at least partly as a result of having influenced Amalric, who is far closer, at least in his ideas to Joachim of Flore and his antinomian pneumatology rather than Eriugena (Capelle 1932: 81–82). However, there is a clear connection to Amalric. With David of Dinant, the situation is a good deal more puzzling. The citations we find in Albert the Great (ed. Casadei 2008) demonstrate no Eriugenian influence at all; they are not even neo-Platonic in any general sense (Casadei (p. 495) 2008; Théry 1925: 126–45). David is reading Aristotle; he is a dialectician, but in the Aristotelian sense, not the Platonic; he is far closer to Abelard than to Eriugena (Théry 1925: 50–84). In fact, he is thoroughly materialist; anything further from Eriugena's 'objective idealism' would be hard to find. What finally emerges regarding David is that he has been reading the early books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and he has accepted the pre-Socratic belief in the unity of the cosmos—a belief which is fundamentally immanentist and materialist (Théry 1925: 28–47). The condemnation of David, then, marks one stage in the battle which raged around the works of Aristotle for most of the thirteenth century—and that is why Albert the Great took such a keen interest in him. Albert was trying to demonstrate that David had misunderstood Aristotle, and that the latter did not deserve to be excluded from the universities on the basis of David's misunderstanding. The quarrel had nothing whatsoever to do with Maximus' cosmology as presented by Eriugena. Simply because some idea of unity underpinned both—but so very differently—he was guilty by association.

It is fascinating to reflect on the association of ideas which lies behind this condemnation. The net result, however, was that the most comprehensive and intelligent attempt to understand and represent the thought of the Greek East for almost a thousand years was almost definitively lost. Only a very select few—for example, Nicholas of Cusa—succeeded in getting beyond the bad odour which attended Eriugena to know his thought, which is, in so many respects, Maximus' thought. For the most part, Eriugena was concealed in a dust-cloud of controversy and

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polemic. However, the issues he had identified as crucial in Maximus' thought are crucial to Christian theology, in particular the issues surrounding deification. It may perhaps be going too far to identify Maximian *theosis* with scholastic *habitus*, but the West needed some kind of theology of God's action in humankind—a theology magnificently expressed in Maximus' cosmology—and this emerges in several places: in the theology of grace, and, interestingly, in Aquinas, in his embryonic aesthetics. Aquinas says that, in order to appreciate the divine beauty, Christ has to make humanity like himself: humanity, alone, is not capable of it. What Aquinas lacks, however, at least in relation to the aesthetics, is Maximus' overarching cosmology and the dynamism inherent in that cosmology, although Aquinas' thought is highly dynamic in other respects. The Maximian cosmology does not seem to be something that the western theological tradition ever fully re-established—although elements of it do emerge in Bonaventure and Dante, and in western mediaeval art and literature.

Suggested Reading

In general, when reading Eriugena, one should use the excellent CCCM editions of his works, produced by Barbet (Barbet 1977), Jeauneau (Jeauneau 1996–2000) and Laga and Steel (Laga and Steel 1980–90), and read the 'Introductions', especially those of Jeauneau to the *Periphyseon*, which give a great deal of information on textual and doctrinal matters, although Floss 1853 is indispensable for the texts of the Dionysian translations, and Sheldon-Williams' (p. 496) 1969–83 introductions are extremely interesting (Sheldon-Williams, 1969–83). Mary Brennan's (Brennan, 1989) annotated bibliographical work is extremely helpful: it was a real service to scholarship by a dedicated scholar who really knew her field. On Eriugena's thought generally, the major works are by Roques 1983, Jeauneau (whose major articles have been collected in Jeaneau 1987), Beierwaltes 1994, and Gersh 1977. Between 1973 and 2000, several volumes were produced in conjunction with the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies, edited by O'Meara and Bieler 1973, Roques 1977, Allard 1986, Beierwaltes 1987 and 1990, and Leonardi–Menestò 1989. On the background to Eriugena's Greek, the essays in Brown–Herren 1988 are helpful. On Eriugena as a translator, see Jeauneau 1979 and 1982 and the references he gives there. On theophany, see Mooney 2009; on *theosis* see Alonso 1950–1, and on dialectic, a recent article referencing Maximus is Erismann 2007. Colnago 2009 has recently published a theological analysis of the poetry which merits attention. As regards the later reception of Eriugena, see the essays in Beierwaltes 1980, Théry 1934, and Capelle 1932. Anastasius the Librarian has been attracting a good deal of attention of late; on his relationship with Eriugena's work, see Forrai 2008 and Harrington 2004.

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Notes:

([1]) Eriugena knew only *Amb.Io*; he did not know the shorter series of *Amb.Th*. This explains the difference in his numbering of the *Ambigua*, and also why PG uses his translation of *Amb.Io.* but uses Combefis for *Amb.Th.*

([2]) See Beierwaltes 1994: 204–62, in which he discusses the question of Eriugena's trinitarianism, concluding that for Eriugena the Trinity is not purely subjective, that is to say, characteristic of human thinking about God, but actually characterizes the divine essence also. In very late neo-Platonism, the question as to whether or not mixture can be found in the One seems also to have become an issue.

Catherine Kavanagh

Catherine Kavanagh is senior lecturer in Philosophy at Mary Immaculate College (Limerick, Ireland).

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